00042907

THE

ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY

Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 28 September, 2015

FABLIAUX OR TALES,

ABRIDGED FROM FRENCH MANUSCRIPTS

OF THE

XIITH AND XIIITH CENTURIES

BY M. LE GRAND,

SELECTED AND

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE,

BY THE LATE G. L. WAY, ESQ.

WITH

A Preface, Notes, and Appendix,

BY THE LATE G. ELLIS, ESQ.

LL h. 21

A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. RODWELL, (SUCCESSOR TO MR. FAULDER,)

NEW BOND STREET,

BY S. HAMILTON, WEYBRIDGE, SURREY.

1815.

42907

398.2109414
Gro1Fai
42907

FABLIAUX OR TALES,

OF THE

TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES.

Hucline and Eglantine,

OR

The Judgment of Love,

OR

Florance and Blanchefleur.

HUE'LINE AND EGLANTINE, &c.

No lack of courtesy in deed or mind
Stain'd the rare wight that wrought the tale ye hear,
Yet therewithal this warning word he join'd;
'Strains such as these befit not baser ear:
'To carles, to faitours, to unfolden clear,
'Love's mystick lore doth much that lore profane;
'To clerks, to knights, to melting damsels dear,
'Yet more than all who weep for others' pain,
'Love's lessons and delights do chiefly appertain.'

In May's sweet month, when teeming nature spreads
Her verdant tap'stry o'er the varied meads,
Yfere two damsels far'd to take the air,
Both nobly born, and both celestial fair;
Huéline this, that Eglantine was nam'd;
Two sisters ne'er more mutual fondness claim'd.
Awhile at random rov'd each lovely maid,
Then in a cool sequester'd vale they stay'd;
A wandering brook did lave its dark-green ground
With many a fair and flowering olive crown'd;
All seem'd with Nature's charms so choicely bless'd,
It won them by that crystal stream to rest,
And down they sat, and in its waters view'd
Their cheeks grown wan with love's inquietude.
'How bless'd,' quoth one, 'must be that lover's state,
'Who sole and fearless here should meet his mate!
'Kind kisses, well I ween, embracements dear,
'We ill might gainsay, if he were but here:

'But looser sport—I trust we should refrain
'From deeds that bring dishonourable stain;
'For what more dire to maid in honour born
'Than a good name defil'd, and left to shameful scorn?'
'Right,' quoth the partner maid; 'with thee I hold
'A spotless honour far more worth than gold.
'As a fair tree, by all with joy beheld,
'While with its friendly green it shades the field;
'Soon as its rivell'd leaf is seen to wane,
'Stands undesir'd and outcast on the plain:
'E'en so, in simple modesty array'd,
'And woo'd by many a swain, the tender maid,
'Should some sad chance her virgin pureness blot,
'Stands scorn'd of all, deserted and forgot.'
So fled the hours in various parley kind;
Love, sense, and frolick foolishness, combin'd:
When a brief question, dropp'd without design
From the sweet lips of artless Eglantine,

Had power their friendly prattling to destroy,
To wake contentious ire, and banish joy.
'Sweet friend of mine!' thus, seated on the grass,
Spake to her beauteous friend the thoughtless lass,
'Come, tell me true, for whom hast thou design'd
'That heart of thine, so loyal, good, and kind?'
Huéline blush'd, then own'd her heart's delight
Was a well-form'd, and fair, and goodly knight.
Young Eglantine, who by contrarious fate
Had chose a comely clerk to be her mate,
Straight 'gan with heedless zeal aloud exclaim—
'O witless choice! O much deserving blame!
'Can maid like thee indulge a love so base?
'A love where courtesy can ne'er have place?
'For where, I crave, can courtesy be found,
'Save with a reverend clerk, for discipline renown'd?'
'Tush!' quoth the friend, 'for courteous thews I deem
'The wight past all, the peerless in esteem,

'Is he who boasts him of the name of knight:—

'Now list awhile, and mark me set you right.

'For proof—what boots it day by day to haunt

'Some church's gloom with melancholy chant,

'Or in some long procession's dismal band

'March slowly on, a psalter in one's hand?

'What boot, I say, these feats to me or you?—

'Yet this is all your learned love can do.

'While absolutions waste his lifeless hours,

'Mine conquers castles and dismantles towers.

'Is there a tourney, and I present there,

'He flies to win the guerdon for his fair:

'Fir'd by that glance whose magick power he knows,

'He clangs his arms, and rushes on his foes;

'Drives with strong lance some adverse knight to ground,

'And leaves his weltering bandroll in the wound:

'Then prompt he turns, and calls his faithful squire,

"Go, bear that steed," he cries, "to her my heart's desire;

" 'Tis the fair meed of dreadless courage, say,

" Of him she honours with her smiles to day."

' Departs the squire: anon, with conquering lance,

' Behold the gallant knight himself advance!

' Glorying he bends before his lady's charms,

' And finds his victory's guerdon in her arms.

' Sweet Eglantine! the partner of my heart!

(' Thou well in all its hopes may'st claim a part;)

' Lo here the wishes of Huéline rest!

' Such the brave wight whose love inspires my breast:

' And com'st thou now thy paramour to vaunt,

' With his pill'd crown? one banish'd human haunt,

' Save when in convoy of some parted ghost

' He earns a supper at the dead man's cost:

' So would he fain we all were done to die,

' Might he but celebrate our obsequy.

' Perchance he brings a present to his dame?

' It speaks, besure, the hand from which it came:

'Some miserable dole, some paltry meed,
'That savours of the burial of the dead.
'In fine, hope nought, whene'er in secret bowers
'To his sole intercourse you yield your hours,
'Save to endure some long romance's tale,
'Or some sad chant from studious cloisters pale.
'Yet hold——in sickness you'll enjoy your friend:
'Then may his prayer your spright to heaven commend;
'Then, dead and gone, your passing-bell he'll toll,
'And pour forth matin requiems for your soul.'

Huéline ceas'd: her partner's soul was stung
With the keen taunt of her licentious tongue.
'On to the tourney!' sharply she replied;
'On to the tilt! your champion by your side!
'When goes he thither?—starve, meseems, or play;—
'When all his scanty means are pawn'd away:
'Lack gage, lack man; no usurer so absurd
'To trust these blustering worthies on their word;

'Just for the time his borrow'd treasures last
'Tis all right well; he lacks not a repast:
Ere long his horse and hauberk; by and by
Helm, sell, and bridle, to the usurer fly;
Then glorying hastes he to his lady's charms,
And finds his victory's guerdon in her arms.
In that bless'd hour, if e'er affection stole
With kindly influence o'er the lass's soul,
She feels some touch of pity in her breast,
And casts to succour her bare boastful guest:
Nor hard the task; bring surcoat, mantle, pall,
He shines once more, a proper knight, and tall:
Then, would you e'er again possess your own,
Your gold must pay the quittance of your loan;
A course not troublesome, meseems, nor dear,
That comes, perchance, some fifty times a year.
For me, not bless'd with such distinguish'd lot,
Forgetful of the mighty, and forgot,

' I, sitting idly in my chair, askance

' Look up, and see my chamber-wench advance:

" My dame!" she cries, " behold this present brought

" From your own lief! how bravely it is wrought!

" A goodly cloke, and jacket of the best;

" A hundred livres sterling, at the least."—

' Then should I choose his fondness to repay,

' 'Tis done at liking, day succeeding day:

' No cause have I to languish and despair

' My lord's long months of absence, none knows where;

' Nor fear, his foolish wanderings overpass'd,

' To find him come a cripple home at last.

' In fine, which more than all besides doth move

' My mind to choose a churchman for my love,

' One mutual interest makes our secret sure,

' And my fame lives from baleful whisperings pure.

' Yet, sweet, my friend, since that we both appear

' To be but parties, and not judges here,

'Hence let us go, and seek some seemly wight,
'And let his wisdom arbitrate our right.'
So counsell'd Eglantine; her partner rose,
And each consenting damsel onward goes
Through the green vale; and, issuing thence at last,
Two bachelors the lovely pilgrims pass'd.
'Friends!' they exclaim'd, 'pray yield us your advice;
'Love's Court we seek, but wot not where it lies.'
'Sweet maids!' the lusty bachelors replied,
'Right gladly will we, with ourselves to guide.'
So all join'd fellowship, two comely pair,
Sped for the Court of Love, and soon were there;
And with a strange delight the precinct trod,
With heavenly fragrance fill'd, the mansion of the god:
His palace was the midst, which flowers enclose,
Sweet fence of many a lily twin'd with rose.
Now (whether thus it fell through maiden shame
If here I show not, hold me void of blame:

Let learned clerks the lurking cause express,
Let wary dames, let bashful maidens, guess:)
Veil'd are their former names with fiction o'er,
Huéline fair, fair Eglantine, no more,
But Florance, damsel for the knights, is here,
And the same hour beholds Blanchefleur appear.
Both at the shady garden's entrance stood,
And crav'd free passage through the mystic wood,
Where, on a shrub, the goodliest of the grove,
Sat perch'd the courier of the God of Love,
(So call the nightingale, whose warbling chime
Tells the sweet month of pleasure and of prime,)
Here plac'd the warder of these odorous bowers,
To bar false passage through their groves of flowers.
Both entrance crav'd, and sued the bird to show
How to the palace gates they best might go.
The heedful warder scann'd them o'er and o'er,
To read if love's mysterious seal they bore,

Sole passport here; then turn'd to lead them soon,
But first requir'd their tributary boon.
'Boon?—tribute bare?'—exclaim they with surprise:
'One dainty kiss alone!' the bird replies:
'This fee not yielded, entrance none ye win:'—
Nought answer'd they, but smil'd and enter'd in.

There, on his roseate couch at ease reclin'd,
The sovereign godhead lay that rules mankind;
Vast was his hall, and garnish'd every part
With many a deadly bow, and many a dart.
Uprose the monarch, as the maids drew near,
With salutation fair, and courteous cheer;
Then with each hand he caught the admiring twain,
Mov'd gently onward to his couch again,
And there sat down the midst: with seemly pride
The pilgrim pair were plac'd on either side.
Their tale now told, and wherefore bent to rove
Their wandering steps had sought the Court of Love,

Straight to his train was given the high command
To call the assembled barons of his land;
A wondrous host! for birds, and birds alone,
Form'd the proud band, the bulwark of his throne.
They met; the eventful question was declar'd;
The maids expectant wait the Court's award:
When, from the press, the sparrow-hawk, the pie,
The cuckow, bird of baleful augury,
The jay, the falcon, loudly clamouring cried,
And hardily stood forth on knighthood's side;
'There, courtesy!' they shriek'd with various tone,
'There courtesy dwelt most, or there alone!'
Press'd on the adverse part, a host of foes,
The royal wren, the amorous pigeon, rose,
The lark, that on his beauteous crest presumes;
And the freak'd goldfinch with vermilion plumes;
These for the clerks maintain'd the conflict dire;
The long hall echoed with contentious ire;

Red ran the blood from many a warriour bold,
And scarce the present god their strife controll'd.
Peace gain'd at last, in front of all the throng
The nightingale in wrath pour'd forth his song.
Slender he was of limb, and small of size,
But his high soul the hardiest foe defies.
Fierce on the ground he hurl'd his gauntlet down,
And loudly brav'd the mightiest in renown;
There, arms in hand, against all comers stood,
To prove the clerks most courteous with his blood.
The god uprose:—'What dauntless bird,' he cried,
'Stands forth the champion now on knighthood's side?'
The parrot heard: he dealt his foe the lie;
Caught up the gage of war with glistening eye,
Straight bore it to the king, with furious flight,
And crav'd his royal sanction for the fight.
Love gave consent; the word each damsel warms;
Each dights her champion knight in seemliest arms:

For helm a rose-leaf either chief had on;
Bright marygold compos'd their gambeson;
And in his hand each grasp'd a deadly blade,
A cimeter of trenchant spear-grass made.
This done, the monarch to the seated crowd
Enjoin'd straight silence, and proclaim'd aloud—
'Let none, spectator of the coming fray,
'Dare change his place; be heedful, and obey:'
Then on the wren the weighty charge conferr'd,
To keep due discipline of deed and word.
Now in the lists the rival pair were seen:
Each on his foe advanc'd with threatening mien:
The nightingale first spake:—'From me,' he cried,
'Take stern defy: and, if thou dar'st abide
'What here I swear, a strife so close and sore,
'That hence, but reft of life, thou go'st no more.'
E'en as he spoke, with sword uplifted high,
He leap'd upon his tardier enemy:

Full on his front came down the furious blow,
And hew'd the sheltering rose-leaf from his brow:
Down fell the bird to earth; there fluttering lay,
Half rising oft, and swooning oft away,
Till now it seem'd his destiny drew nigh;
The wretch believes himself about to die:
Then from his lips some secret impulse draws
The frank confession of his worthless cause:
His sword foregone, the clerks he straight proclaims
In courtesy past peer, and love of dames.
So spake the parrot, and so ceas'd the strife,
And the king's bounty spar'd his forfeit life.

But for the luckless Florance, sore regret
At her base champion and his foul defeat,
On her sad spright with wasteful canker preys,
And grim despair ere long cuts short her days.
Thereat the pitying birds around her come,
And on her corse heap up a flowery tomb;

In front this sculptur'd verse the pilgrim spies;

'A KNIGHT'S FAIR MISTRESS HERE SEPULCHRED LIES.'

Griselidis.

GRISELIDIS.

In Lombardy, where Piedmont's Alpine bound
Sees fair Saluces' region stretch'd around,
With long hereditary honours great
The Marquis Gautier rul'd his peaceful state.
Rich was his realm, and he its prime delight;
First of his noble stock in princely might;

Of well proportion'd limbs, of comely face;
Endow'd by nature's boon with every grace,
Save that, enamour'd of free single life,
He brook'd no mention of the name of wife.
Sore grief of heart their lord's reluctance gave
To many a vassal tried, and baron brave.
All met at length: new hopes from union rose;
And, the crowd praising what the chiefs propose,
Forth to the palace far'd a chosen band,
And thus they spoke the wishes of the land:
'Great Marquis, and our liege! in love we seek
('Tis very love emboldens us to speak,)
'Thy presence and kind ear; we own us bless'd,
'And thee the noblest of thy rank, and best:
'Yet, dear dread sire! to thee time's course is known;
'Wing'd seasons pass, and are for ever gone!
'Thee, now in comeliness past all thy peers,
'And in thy lusty prime, and flower of years,

'Old age treads fast behind, with ceaseless pace,
'And death, that all things living must deface.
'Then grant thy vassals, (to sustain thy throne
'Aye bound and bent to make thy will their own,)
'Seek out some high-born dame, young, virtuous, fair,
'Saluces' sovereignty and bed to share:
'So, should a foul and disadventurous fate
'Reach our lov'd lord, and snatch him from the state,
'Some comfort would be found, some stay remain,
'While o'er the weeping realm thy child should reign.'
The barons paus'd: affection unrepress'd
Rose, as they sued, in noble Gautier's breast:
'Friends!' he replied, 'it joys me, I confess,
'To pass good days in blissful singleness;
'Such has been aye my bent, from wedlock free
'To live, sans care, a life of liberty.
'In wedlock waning freedom shrinks to nought,
'If those claim trust, by sore experience taught:—

'Then, for our issue;—when we, anxious sires,
'Gain these prime objects of our best desires,
'How know we they be ours? or be not bred,
'Base offspring! in a violated bed?—
'Howbeit, my friends, your loyal suit has thriven;
'I'll wed me; and I trust all-bounteous heaven
'Shall guide me in the choice of this my wife,
'And strew with comfort what remains of life:
'Yet ye, in turn, must make one promise sure,
'Be she a rich man's daughter, or a poor,
'Of high or lowly lineage, as your dame
'Her to respect and honour aye the same:
'No blame may be endur'd, no slanderous voice
'Shall, murmuring, dare impeach your sovereign's choice.'

So spake the Marquis, and with grateful cry
All loud proclaim their vow'd fidelity.

'Thanks for the boon!' well pleas'd he hears them say,
Then joins in council for the nuptial day:
On, through Saluces' region, cliff or vale,
Flows universal joy, as spreads the tale.
Not far away the castle's brow look'd o'er
The scatter'd dwellings of some village poor;
Nigh to a forest, and, on days of chase,
The Marquis oft was passing through the place:
There, with his pheeres, Janicola abode,
An old poor man, so bow'd beneath the load
Of crippling years, that he was fain to lie
Aye on his bed, for mere infirmity.
Yet oft within the mean unsightly cot
Heaven's blessing dwells, and soothes its owner's lot:
His wife, to kindred earth long since resign'd,
Had left one darling duteous child behind;
For mind most rare, though rare in earthly frame,
Griselidis the lovely maiden's name.

Each morn, when first the sun was seen to peep,
To pasture forth she led her father's sheep;
And, when the evening vapours clogg'd the air,
Hous'd-in the scanty flock with mickle care:
Then rais'd her helpless sire with fostering arm,
Smooth'd his hard bed, and made his pottage warm.
All service and all care a child can owe
To a fond parent, still this maid would show;
With filial sweetness wayward pains assuage,
And solace the decrepitude of age.
Long had the Marquis heard what rumour said
Of the meet conduct of this village maid;
And oft, in hunting, halted where she stood,
And gaz'd her beauties o'er in museful mood:
'Should aught' (thus still his inmost thoughts would rise,)
'Cause me my freedom change for marriage ties,
'That excellent young maid I yonder see,
'Griselidis, the old man's child, is she.'

Meanwhile the days and weeks were past and gone;
The hour, in counsel fix'd to wed, came on:
The palace, throng'd to grace the nuptial rites
With high-descended dames, and gallant knights,
With burghers, and with folk of all degree,
Seem'd one grand mart of choice festivity.
But where the future spouse, how nam'd or known
This chosen consort of Saluces' throne,
Much ask'd, unanswer'd still, by knight or dame,
Slept undivulg'd; when forth the bridegroom came.
On from his palace, gorgeous in array,
As to receive the bride, he led the way;
In long-drawn files his issuing pomp succeeds,
Dames, knights, and blazon'd arms, and prancing steeds.
Thus, sideways winding from the public road,
He reach'd good old Janicola's abode.
'Janicola!' quoth he, 'my thoughts record
'Thee aye a faithful liegeman to thy lord.

'Now am I come to put thy love to test,
'And ask one proof surpassing all the rest:
''Tis a dear boon, nor may I be denied;—
'Thy duteous child must be thy sovereign's bride.'
Scarce might the wondering man his silence break,
To so strange proffer meet reply to make:
Then humbly thus:—'Liege lord! be all fulfill'd!
'My duty bids me will what thou hast will'd.'
Griselidis the while, with glowing face,
And eyes to earth that never chang'd their place,
Stood all abash'd at such unwonted guest;
And Gautier thus the downcast maid address'd.
'Griselidis!' quoth he, 'to be my mate,
'And share in wedlock's bands Saluces' state,
'Thee would I win; Janicola content,
'From his dear child I hope a like consent.
'Yet must I first require—canst thou abide,
'Nought from thy vow'd obedience turn'd aside,

Strange stern commandments, wayward, steep'd in gall,
And meekly execute or suffer all?
This must my consort do; and this demand,
'Tis fit thou answer ere I take thy hand.'
'My liege!' Griselidis replied, 'thy will
'Thy handmaid waits, obedient to fulfil;
'Behold me mute, to death itself resign'd,
'If such doom rise within my sovereign's mind.'
Thus while she spoke, the Marquis leads the maid
Where rang'd without his wondering barons stay'd:
'Lo, friends!' he cries, 'the dame my thoughts prefer!
'Me if ye love and honour, honour her!'
E'en as he ceas'd, the long extended train
Wheel'd round for proud Saluces' towers again:
There seemly matrons, with officious speed,
Doff, blushing as she stands, her lowly weed;
With nuptial robes her trembling limbs invest,
And straight Saluces' bride appears confess'd,

Half wondering at herself:—All ye who hear,
If, having seen the village maid whilere,
Ye now beheld her proud Saluces' spouse,
With the rich circle glittering on her brows,
Ye sure with strange emotion must have gaz'd,
And, as the garb, the princely wearer prais'd.
The self-same day behold the wedding rites,
With all that land might boast of choice delights:
Loud through the hall symphonious warblings sound,
And shouts that fill the echoing welkin round;
Their sovereign's joy his faithful subjects share,
And greet, in crowds, the newly wedded pair.
Still as the weeks sped on, and more they knew,
Love for their princely mistress strengthen'd too:
So affable she seem'd, to all so kind,
With such a spotless majesty of mind,
That those who erst remember'd her, or not,
Hail'd, with united voice, her alter'd lot.

A year was scarcely past;—and now she press'd
Her first-born infant to a mother's breast:
A little lovely maid, whose looks declare
A new Griselidis in promise fair,
To glad a father's heart, though not a prince's heir.
So, nourish'd with her mother's milk awhile,
Throve the sweet babe, and all things seem'd to smile;
But, wean'd at length, the restless Gautier's mood,
Though still each hour his growing fondness view'd,
Cast thus his consort's excellence to wound,
And urge meek duty to its utmost bound.
Her chamber entering, with dejected tone,
And looks that spoke a bosom wo-begone,
'Grirelidis!' he said, 'I trust the pride
'And pageantry of court has never tried
'So far thy mind, as that thy former lot
'Of rustic poverty should be forgot.'—

'For me, my spouse, as thou perchance may'st guess
'By many a proof of constant tenderness,
'All memory of the days thou once hadst known,
'Was well nigh vanish'd quite away and gone.
'But 'tis not so without:—my barons mourn;
'And chiefly since our female child was born,
'Loud murmurs rise; and ill 'tis brook'd, they say,
'The grandaughter of poor Janicola
'Should claim their vassal-vows, though at a distant day.
'Me mainly it behoves, come weal come wo,
'To cause their loyalty and friendship grow:
'Though to my heart the sacrifice come nigh,
'Still yield I must to strong necessity.
'Yet could I not proceed in my design,
''Till I had thus forewarn'd thee, consort mine!
'And sought consent:—now then to proof arouse
'The patience pledg'd ere thou becam'st my spouse!'

'Dear sire!' (her look no sign of sadness spoke
While thus Griselidis meek silence broke;)
'Thou art my wedded lord!—my child and I
'Are thine too by the right of sovereignty.
'Whatever thou ordain, my loyal will
'Shall prove its vow'd obedience stedfast still.'
She ceas'd to speak: to admiration mov'd
At the sweet answer of the wife he lov'd,
The Marquis Gautier straightway left the place
With well-pretended sorrow in his face;
Straight at his call a trusty wight appears,
Gray with the services of thirty years:
To him he shews the secret of his heart,
With warnings, fitliest how to shape his part;
And to the Marchioness the menial goes,
And thus begins the messenger of woes.
'Lady, and sovereign liege! with pardon bear
'The grievous mandate I must needs declare:—

'Briefly—my lord ordains, without delay,

'These arms should bear your infant child away.'

Swift shot the thought, and seem'd her soul to rend,

'This man my infant's hapless days must end!'—

Howbe, her fears she stifled in her breast,

Her struggling sobs, her rising tears suppress'd:

Then with a long fond look, that might not weep,

Gaz'd on her cradled darling, fast in sleep,

And o'er its brows the Christian's symbol made,

And gave one parting kiss, and Gautier's hest obey'd.

Back to his lord the trusty menial hies;

Glad wonder sparkles in Saluces' eyes:

Then, as the helpless babe to weep began,

Stretch'd on his arm; it shook his inmost man:

His wife's meek worth, his wailing infant's wo,

Nigh made him swerve, and further proof forego.

Yet, resolute of will, the menial old

Anon he bids his secret course to hold

To proud Boulogna's tower-defended gate,
Where dwells his sister fair in sovereign state,
Empeche's countess; to whose care consign'd
Such nurture meet her infant niece should find
As her own child, yet nothing known or said
E'en to the princely consort of her bed.
So fares the babe; while, with her wedded lord
As wont, the partner of his couch and board,
Griselidis remains; nor might he spy,
Stamp'd on a thoughtful brow, or cheerless eye,
One trace betokening grief, or secret blame;
Still meek Griselidis is found the same:
Still the same love, the same obedience shown,
And to her husband's heart conform'd her own.
Thus peacefully four rolling years are pass'd;
And now a mother's pangs, increasing fast,
Grace noble Gautier with a goodly boy,
And fill the father and the realm with joy:

Seems the dark season of affliction o'er,
While nurtur'd, as its sister heretofore,
The heir to sire alike and mother dear,
Drew nigh the period of its second year;
Then Gautier once again his spouse address'd,
And put the patience of her soul to test.
O! what a mortal strife of sorrow rose
In this rare victim of unequall'd woes,
As, musing on her long-lost daughter's doom,
Her aching heart foretold her ill to come!
What mother lives there? nay, what woman's mind,
Not dead to every feeling of her kind,
But, when the cruel sentence smote her ears,
Had wept this sufferer's lot with bitter tears?
Hear! queens or cottagers!—hear! base and high!
And profit by the peerless wife's reply!
'Lov'd lord!' she said, 'ere from my home I came,
'I vow'd a vow—I here confirm the same,—

'Thy word, wish, thought, obsequious to fulfil,
'And own no guide but noble Gautier's will.
'Ere yet my footsteps pass'd thy palace gate,
'And my poor weed was chang'd for robes of state,
'I stripp'd me of myself; and were it mine
'Your inmost thoughts prophetick to divine,
'My duty should forerun your slow command:—
'Lo! if my death may please, lo, here I stand!—
'Far better brook I death, held now at nought,
'Than thy displeasure, lord, though but in thought.'
Such stedfastness may seem, to stranger eye,
Mere fault of nature in her tenderest tie;
But Gautier, who had notic'd at her breast
How either babe was borne, and how caress'd,
Well knew that love alone such force inspir'd,
And more and more his matchless spouse admir'd.
This second dreadful trial overcome,
This darling's fate hung round with deadly gloom,

Meseems that Gautier should have spar'd to prove
With further sorrow such unshaken love.
Some hearts, howbe, there are, of canker'd mould,
Whom shrewd suspicion governs uncontroll'd;
Who, when they once begin, can never cease:
Whose solace springs from marring others' peace.
Such then might Gautier's be; for though he found
His wife's meek fondness more and more abound,
His jealous spirit still new torments stor'd,
And anguish for the woman he ador'd.

Twelve years had now a circling race fulfill'd
Since to Boulogna went the female child;
The son was eight; and Gautier ween'd their age
Less suited now to foreign pupillage:
To prove their mother then, he spreads report
Of a strange lady journeying to his court,
High-born, and young withal, and debonair,
In wedlock's bands Saluces' throne to share.

Then, summoning his spouse, the wayward man,
Girt with his chosen barons, thus began:
'Griselidis, twelve years I have enjoy'd
'Thy wedded excellence, unchang'd, uncloy'd:
'I pleas'd my soul with such transcendant worth,
'And, finding virtue, disregarded birth.
'Now have my vassals' claim:—with loud demand,
"Childless," they cry, 'the sceptre of the land,
"Needs then must Gautier wed, nor rightful suit withstand.'
'Rome's holy pontiff yields to the request,
'And grants their Marquis choose where likes him best.
'Ere many days be pass'd, the noble bride
'Comes, and our vows will then be ratified.
'Thou, therefore, soon retire! take back thy dower!
'And arm thee to endure the advancing hour!'
'My lord!' Griselidis began to say,
'Well wist I, sprung from poor Janicola,

'Low, cottage-born, to humble labour bred,
'I never could beseem Saluces' bed.
'Heaven knows, since first within these walls I came,
'By thee to honour rais'd, thy wedded dame,
'Though grateful evermore, how could I less?—
'Still have I felt my own unworthiness!
'Now, dear my lord, since thou hast will'd it so,
'Hence, unlamenting what is left, I go!
'From these fair scenes awayward turn my sight,
'Scenes, where I long have sojourn'd with delight,
'And humbly, as befits me, forth I hie,
'In the same cottage I was born, to die:
'And, ere this fall, to him who gave me birth,
'Smoothing his dreary passage to the earth,
'Once more a daughter's duty to fulfil,
'Left to a stranger long, against my will!
'For what thou say'st of dower, thou know'st, my lord,
'When erst thou led'st me to thy couch and board

'My all was a chaste heart, true love for thee,
'And reverence, clad in honest poverty.
'These robes that cover me to thee pertain;
'Take them! and yield me my coarse weeds again:
'This ring—here—here! no longer my concern!—
'Poor from my father came I, poor return;
'Nought coveting hence with me but the name
'Of Gautier's widow'd consort, void of blame!'

Much was Saluces mov'd: it shook him so,
He turn'd, to let his tears in secret flow.
Meanwhile Griselidis her purpose sped;
Stripp'd off the sparkling gems that grac'd her head,
Her sumptuous robes, her garniture of state;
And cought in russet weed the palace gate.
Her, dames and knights and barons, passing forth,
Attend, in weeping witness of her worth:
She only, wept not; mute, with look profound,
Slow pacing home, and gazing on the ground.

Janicola, whom years, not pass'd in vain,
Had shown that nought below might firm remain,
Nor rage, nor grief, nor wonder in his face,
Clasp'd his dear offspring with a sire's embrace,
Then thank'd the nobles all with plain good-will,
And warn'd them to their prince be loyal still.
'Such strange disparagement can prosper nought;'
Thus wisely from the first the old man thought;
'My daughter's charms must minish and decay,
'And Gautier send her home some future day:'
Yet one thing to the father's heart went near;
'The loss of delicates by use grown dear
'Must needs press hard; and ill the pamper'd mind
'Brook years to pinching poverty consign'd.'
And now, with brave array, and gorgeous train,
Empeche's count and countess haste amain,
Scarce one day's journey from Saluces' land,
And bring two lovely children in their hand.

Then to complete her sum of trials sore,
Gautier assay'd his peerless spouse once more:
'Child of Janicola!' he briefly cried,
'To-morrow brings my long expected bride:
'Thyself, meseems, past other women skill'd
'To see my princely wishes well fulfill'd:
'With her my sister and her count draw nigh,
'And a proud train of matchless chivalry:
'Thou, then, for all provide; hall, bower, and feast;
'Yet chiefliest for thy sovereign's bridal guest.'
Griselidis, in weed of homely gray,
Meet orders issuing, hastes her to obey;
Decks with assiduous hand her rival's throne,
And spreads the nuptial couch so late her own:
Then, with a modest, mute, unvarying grace,
That thread-bare poverty could not debase,
Respectfully she waits the bride to greet,
And to the spousal bower conducts her feet.

She wist not how it were, but still she turn'd,
And inly, by a wondrous instinct, yearn'd;
Gaz'd on the dainty maid, the ingenuous boy,
And felt inspir'd, as with a mother's joy.

Now were the countless guests assembled all;
Steam'd the choice banquet in the vaulted hall;
Chief of the feast sat Gautier, by his side
Prime beauty, costliest art, declare the bride.
'How think'st thou then?' he cries with jocund voice,
'Dost thou, Griselidis, approve my choice?'
'Yes, truly, lord!—a worthier or more fair
'Might not,' quoth she, 'be chosen any where:
'Heaven grant ye happiness! my prayer shall rise
'Each day for this, in humble sacrifice.
'Yet, sire! for pity's sake forbear to burst
'This heart with piercing anguish like the first!
'Her tender years, her nurture, daintier high,
'Might not abide the proof!—the maid would die!'

Thus while she spake, tears, nothing could restrain,
Flow'd down Saluces' moisten'd cheeks amain:
'Dear, dear Griselidis!' aloud he cried,
'There lives not man on earth, myself beside,
'Of power to think how strangely I have prov'd,
'Thee, thee, most loyal wife, and ever lov'd!'—
Then, as his words found way his spouse he cheers,
Press'd to his bosom fast, with many tears;
And 'Thou alone;' he adds, 'for ever join'd!
'Peerless! the paragon of womankind!
'Thou! other none on earth so worthy me,
'Aye wast my wife, and still my wife shall be!
'Thou, (so my subjects ween'd,) didst ween my doom,
'Had sent thy babes to an untimely tomb;
'Lo here! long nurtur'd by my sister's hand,
'Thine eldest, and her princely brother stand!
'Kneel, children twain! and reverence, humbly bent,
'A mother, such as heaven hath rarely sent!'

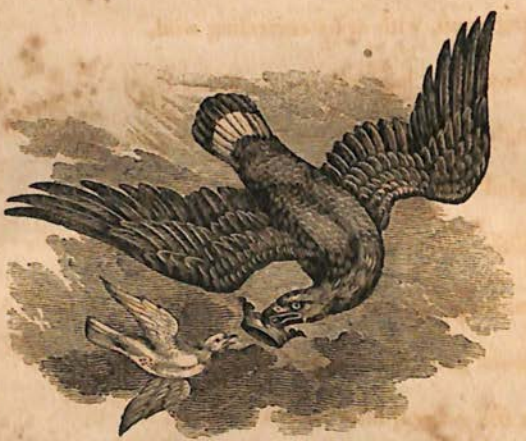
Such strange excess of overwhelming bliss,
Too much at once for meek Griselidis,
Bow'd to a speechless swoon her yielding frame,
And voice, and thought, and life, a while o'ercame:
Waking anon, with arms encircling wild,
She shower'd a mother's joy on either child:
Through the long train the infectious feeling flies,
And glad tears glisten in a thousand eyes:
The blithe hall rings with welcomes aye increas'd,
And smiles with double joy the nuptial feast.

Eftsoons good old Janicola is there,
And in the general bliss is seen to share.
His daughter's trials o'er, his troubles cease,
And his days end in honourable peace.

Full twenty years to wedded rights restor'd,
Dwells the meek lady, with her loving lord;
In calm unvarying concord glide their hours;
Their children's babes adorn the grandsire's bowers:

And, when their glass has shed its latest sand,

The heir with wisdom rules the willing land.



The Countess of Vergy.

THE COUNTESS OF VERGY.

HENCE, guileful caitiffs all!—ill hap attend
That worst of traitors, a perfidious friend!
Loyal in guise, his serpent coil he winds
Round the frank singleness of noble minds;
Sucks forth the hoarded secret of the breast,
Then casts it to the rabble's scornful jest.
Note well, (what grievous failures sadly prove;)
Best suit discreet mysterious ways with love!

Who heeds not, sure shall gather baleful fruit;
In mid career broke short his frustrate suit;
Well sped, so all end here; nor heavier woes
Fall, such as now these warning rhymes disclose.
Fair beyond praise, of worth and lineage high,
Niece to the Duke of fruitful Burgundy,
In honour liv'd of Vergy's rich domain
And lofty towers the Lady Castellain.
As yet her years were few, her heart unmov'd;
The beauteous Countess never yet had lov'd.
Sir Agolane, the brave, the mild, the gay,
In silent passion long had pin'd away:
On the bright dame, whene'er the hour allow'd,
Unseen, unnotic'd, by the circling crowd,
Still would he gaze, still sigh with secret prayer;
Nor, hopeless though he seem'd, would yet despair.
Such faith deserv'd its meed: the princely dame
Felt pity kindling to a brighter flame:

Nor what she felt her guileless heart denied;
She would, but for her state, have been his bride:
Here, here alas! imperious rank withstood,
And barr'd disparagement with humbler blood.

His suit, howe'er, with fostering smiles she bless'd,
And the young knight became her secret guest;
Bound by a vow, the sanction of his fate,
(Else tenderness should change to deadliest hate,)
Ne'er from that hour, let weal or woe ensue,
To wray requited love, or vaunt the bliss he knew.

In her wide castle's bound a chamber stood
That open'd on a plenteous orchard's wood:
Oft as his sovereign dame such grace decreed,
To these low shades the lover wont to speed,
Tiptoe, alone, at night's obscurest hour,
There still would lurk the loyal paramour;
There still would roam, conceal'd within the grove,
And wait the joyous messenger of love.

Whene'er the dame the conscious chamber sought,
In her fair hand a spaniel leash'd she brought,
Then spied if all were sure, and slipp'd the noose
Straightways, and let the bounding courier loose:
He forth with merry babblings, springs amain,
And, fondling, hails his well-known Agolane.
On to the genial chamber glides the boy,
And bathes in full beatitude of joy;
Till from the east, forbidding longer stay,
Peer the first glories of the mounting day.

Thus liv'd the lovers twain; the loyal youth
And his heart's liege, in uncorrupted truth:
Their bliss was at its height; could aught improve
Such rare felicity of cordial love,
'Twas, sure, that (conscious to themselves alone,)
The excluded world was nought, their joys were all their own.

Oft, ye may ween, the warriour would resort
To the brave pastimes of his sovereign's court:
Bold Burgundy his liegeman oft beheld
First in the glories of the justing field:
His gallant bearing goodliest guerdon won,
For the Duke grew to love him as his son:
Alas! worse passion fir'd his consort's breast,
Unlawful flame, ill wishes, unrepress'd!
She might nor coldly view such wondrous grace,
Such comeliness of limb, such form of face,
Nor vail her fires; the knight had sure been mov'd,
But that his heart lack'd room, he could not more have lov'd.
One day, for that she saw all tokens vain
To picture out her hopes, or sooth her pain,
Drawn to a lonely bower, the wanton's art
Spoke strange surprise that none had mov'd his heart:
Gay was his sovereign's court, with beauty fraught,
Yet he seem'd free, nor love nor leman sought.

'Fear,' he replied, 'his feebler wishes chain'd,
'Of vows, of vain presumptuous suit, disdain'd:'
'Base diffidence,' she cried, 'unmeet alarms,
'Unworthy of his great renown in arms:
'High as his merits rose should rise his claims,
'To suit, to conquest, of the loftiest dames;
'Such dames were known, such dames she well could gu
'Might own so brave a suppliant claim'd success.'
So lur'd the ducal dame; the warriour wise,
With modest seeming wav'd her bold advice:
'Ill might he mate (he told,) ignoble birth
'With bliss for kings and rulers of the earth:
'Such hope he held not; should he proudly trust,
'Soon would his towering pride be borne to dust.'
'How (quoth the dame,) might modesty reply,
'Should we think meet to crown his chivalry?
'Should Agolane, my knight, new favours prove,
'And find long friendship softening into love?'

'Liege lady! (thus, his speech submiss combin'd
Well with an air of frankness, he rejoin'd;)
'I wist not of such grace! that such is given
'Great thanks to you belong, and guiding heaven!
'Still may its sovereign aid my course direct,
'Loyal, and firm, in honour unsuspect,
'Such be my service ever! void of blame
'Towards my liege lord, and thee his ducal dame!'
'Who wills thee?' who?' the kindling dame replies,
'False to thy lord?—who talks of perjuries?'—
She spoke, and turn'd; ungovernable ire,
And bitter shame of unrestrain'd desire,
Had chang'd her thoughts to vengeance, and to brood
On deadliest deeds in baleful solitude.
Now shone the stars in heaven: with throbbing breast,
Sad lay the Duchess down, disdaining rest:
Her lord soon mark'd her struggling sorrows rise,
Groans half conceal'd, and interrupted sighs;

And 'Love! what ails thee?' tenderly he cried:
'For thee, sweet lord, I weep!' the dame replied;
'O'er thee I mourn, of faith, of trust, bereav'd!—
'Sad lot of greatness, still to be deceiv'd!
'To find least fruit where most we seek to bless,
'And wrongs, grown monstrous through unthankfulness.
'Sir Agolane—(it needs not here be said
'How thou hast shower'd down bounties on his head,)
'He, he, but yesterday, with guilty vows
'Pour'd forth dishonour's suit before thy spouse!
'Now may the marvel cease: our dames, I wot,
'Felt, with myself, that Agolane lov'd not;
'No meaner charms, forsooth, then might control
'Such prime hypocrisy, and pride of soul.'
So foul return from him he lov'd the best,
Sunk deep into the Duke's o'erburthen'd breast:
With sleepless eyes, that sadly sought for light,
On pass'd the lingering moments of the night;

Day came, and up he rose; nor brook'd delay,
But gave his bitter flood of passion way:
Charg'd on his liegeman home his plot abhor'd,
Disloyal, recreant, to his bounteous lord;
And vow'd, unless, ere next day's sun rode high,
He breath'd strange air, self-borne from Burgundy,
That land the guerdon of such crimes should see,
And a vile death be his, on gallow-tree.
Such undeserv'd reproach, so stern a lot,
Fix'd Agolane in silence to the spot:
Chief, like a shaft of ice, his life-blood through,
Shot the dread thought—'My love no more I view!'
At length, o'erpass'd the numbing shock of pain,
And innocence resuming strength again,
'Liege lord!' he cried, 'for truth's sake call to mind
'How long in spotless honour I have shin'd!
'Many a good year hath seen me, loyal, just;
'Who now maintains I have betray'd my trust?

'Some secret foe that scatters canker'd guile,
'And seeks to render virtuous knighthood vile.'
No foe!' the Duke returns; 'my princely spouse
'Herself the accuser stands, and tells thy traitor vows!'
'Sire!' Agolane replied, 'it needs must be,
'Since thus my royal mistress speaks of me,
'Some things have fallen amiss; to fate I bow!
'Best, sure, befits your knight be speechless now:
'Vain were the hope, sith so these charges press,
'That innocence like mine should find redress.'

Esteem yet warm, but more the impressive mien,
And calm sad tone of injur'd Agolane,
Weigh'd heavy on the Duke's distracted mind;
Yet still one doubt remain'd, unsolv'd, behind:
'Sure,' thus his reasonings ran, 'the stripling cold
'Seems void of love, as well my spouse hath told:
'No lady of the court his suit inspires:—
'Love yet he must; but 'tis with lawless fires.'

'—Sir Agolane!—my soul is mov'd with ruth!—
'Now, on thy knighthood's honour, speak the truth!
'Tell what I straight shall ask thee!—dost consent?'—
'Yea!' quoth the knight, (unweeting what were meant;
Who hop'd, perchance, his faith might so be prov'd,
And he scape exile from his best-belov'd,)
'Speak on, my lord!'—'Sir knight!' the Duke returns,
'With love, 'tis seen, young Agolane ne'er burns;
'So seems it to the court;—yet love thou dost!
'Tell who the dame, and to thyself be just.
'Let thy liege sovereign's earnest prayer prevail!
'To thy tried friend entrust the mystick tale!
'So grow our hearts together!—else, depart!
'Exile and matchless traitor as thou art!'
Now Agolane sigh'd sore, and on his brow
Thick gathering gloom pourtray'd the rashness of his vow.
'What?' should he teach the Duke how he had thriven,
'And violate the oath to Vergy given?

'Yet banishment waits silence!—nought remains
'Each way, but loss of all that life sustains.
Might he in exile view her, though by stealth?
'Then banishment were bliss, his heart's best health!—
'Alas! his wanderings she can never share,
'And life becomes a load too great to bear!'

So toss'd by desperate thoughts, that either way
For mastery strove with huge tempestuous sway,
Sir Agolane's firm manhood yields at last;
Tears trickle down his fading cheeks full fast.
Bold Burgundy was mov'd: he vow'd a vow
By all that suzerains to their liegemen owe,
Never! no, never!—would his friend confide
The dear dread secret—aye should it abide
Fast rooted in his heart!—this crave he must,
But as a precious proof of mutual trust.
'O Agolane!' he cried, 'what fears control?
'Why secret, with the partner of thy soul?

'Is this unchang'd affection's meet reward.'—

'Tis past then, and thou seek'st the hatred of thy lord!'

Affection's dear reproach, and precious pain,

Smote home upon the breast of Agolane:

He dares his love's mysterious course reveal,

The secret of his life, and pledge of wo or weal!

The Duke scarce yields belief: from human eye

The spot so seem'd of choicest privacy,

There must his beauteous niece have dwelt secure,

To mortal men unknown, and love's fallacious lure.

For proof he spoke but truth, the knight agrees

(Nor might he else bold Burgundy appease,)

That at a destin'd spot, when twilight dun

Told the last glimpses of the sinking sun,

The twain should meet; thence seek the orchard's shade;

So sight should prove what speech in vain assay'd.

Now, as the knight's accustom'd step drew nigh,

Forth sprang the spaniel with exultant cry:

Then feign'd contentment clear'd the suzerain's brow;
'Tis true!' quoth he, 'I do believe thee now!—
'Farewell, Sir Agolane!'—he spoke, and turn'd;
On hied the knight, his heaving bosom burn'd.
Back straight, with printless tread, the Duke behind
Close on his steps attends, resolv'd to find
This strange adventurous secret's course unknown,
Learn what the end, and credit sight alone.
Straight through the chink the half-clos'd doorway g
He spies how onward press'd the adventurer brave:
Sees, wild with joy, fair Vergy's heightening charms,
Her knight close press'd within her lily arms;
Hears broken words, that scarce their meaning told,
'Mid intermingling kisses thousandfold:—
'Sweet friend! sole joy! and all I hold most dear!
'O what a length of time since thou wast here!
'And, thee far hence, how slow the loitering sun!
'Scarce seems the languid stream of life to run.

'But now, gone sadness; unremembered pain!—
'Now bliss returns, for thou art found again!'
And, as she paus'd, against her rising breast,
Blithe to meet his, her loyal mate she press'd;
(Speechless, for time was yielded none, to tell
How dearly he esteem'd her, lov'd how well:)
Then led him to her bower:—my verse, I wis,
To shadow out such love's transcendant bliss,
Too weak and vile!—the hasty night fled fast,
And the first hour seem'd mingled with the last:
Love's favourites may alone such raptures know,
Love's favourites! for not all he favours so.

The Duke, meanwhile, within the orchard's gloom
Stay'd through the night, in watch for scenes to come;
And, at the tinkling of the matin bell,
Saw the fond faithful lovers' last farewell.
Convinc'd long past, still justice bade him stay
To clear the ranklings of distrust away.

'O Agolane!' he cried, 'now, now I own
'The injury, the wrong that I have done,
'Yet, yet, forgive! and let my future years atone!'
Surpriz'd stood Agolane, to see so nigh,
Ween'd long since gone, illustrious Burgundy:
Then yet again conjures, by all that binds,
With tie most sacred, honourable minds,
Down in his heart's recess to bury deep
The strange dread secret in eternal sleep.
'If, in the vasty universe, one breast,
'One eye, should hold or witness what thou seest,
'One other brow suspicion's glance betray,
'Grief sweeps my wretched rest of life away!'
'Nay, never name it more!' the Duke rejoin'd,
'I from this hour erase it from my mind.'
Then, while to feats remote his speech he bends,
Back haste unseen the re-united friends.

The noontide meats were serv'd; there, most caress'd,
Sat Agolane, the foremost of the feast;
On him new courtesies, profusely pour'd,
Mark'd the full friendship of his contrite lord.
It wrung the indignant dutchess to the soul;
The banquet scorn'd, and life-diffusing bowl,
Up from the feastful board behold her gone,
Stretch'd on her couch in agony alone.
Her duke the unlook'd-for deed with wonder views,
Then, weetless of the cause, her steps pursues.
'And canst thou ask me then? and ought not I,
'So scorn'd,' exclaim'd she, 'of disdain to die?
'When he, first object of our common hate,
'Sits by thy side, the greatest 'mid the great?
'When, held for nought my tale of traitor wo,
'Thou mock'st me, present, honouring thus my foe?'
'Cease, cease, my spouse!' cried Burgundy, 'abstain
'To vent base tales on spotless Agolane.

'I know right well what fits me to believe;
'His heart, how wrought, in proof that never can deceive:
'Ask nought beyond:—on this alone depend,
'Nor thou, nor living wight, can wrest me from my friend.'

Ireful he spoke, of answer brooking nought,
And left the astonish'd dutchess nigh distraught.
Who may her pangs describe?—a favour'd fair,
Barr'd knowledge and revenge!—'tis full despair!
Still hopeful jealousy in whispers told,
'Fast on thy consort's heart thy charms have hold;
'Choose night's unheedful hour; with frozen pride,
'When thy fond lord would place him by thy side,
'Rise to retire.'—'Tis done:—She shuns her lord,
As she for aye renounc'd his couch abhorr'd.
He stays her;—'O thou false one!' sighs the dame,
'Still are thy sweet dissembling wiles the same!

'Long has thy glozing tongue (belief so dear,
'That if my thoughts told guile, I could not hear!)
'Won me to think myself thy bosom friend:—
'Now, cruelly arouz'd, my day-dreams end!
'False Agolane, in lies too well refin'd,
'Hath practis'd on thy plain ingenuous mind;
'Thy secret I ask not; yet I, my lord,
'Joy'd to unbosom aught that I had stor'd,
'Most bless'd, when thou knew'st all, the master of my hoard!'
Here bursting sobs, as now restrain'd too long,
Chok'd up the bitter sequel of her wrong:
'Sweet love! sole partner mine! estrang'd from thee,
(Then interpos'd afflicted Burgundy,)
I seek no longer life! yet, yet, my spouse,
Bethink thee! ought thy lord to break his vows?'—
—Nay, break them not!' the dame returns again,
Yet gild more speciously thy pretext vain!

'Oft secrets most momentous, thou, too kind,

'To me, thy wedded partner, hast consign'd,

When have I ever swerv'd, or shown a woman's mind?

'No! no! thou fear'st not this!—'tis o'er! 'tis o'er!

'Thy heart is alienate, thou lov'st no more!'

Therewith again big singults marr'd her breath,

Tears streaming down her visage, pale as death.

'Ay me! I cannot view thee thus!—now see

(Cries her sad lord,) 'what love I bear to thee:

'Then give thou heed to thine!—should'st thou betray

'The secret I reveal this dreadful day,

'My vengeance will be mortal!—thou wilt die!

''Tis a dread covenant—dar'st thou aby?'

'Ungrateful!—yes, I dare!—that worse I brook—

(Sharp cries the Dutchess with distemper'd look,)

'That worse for death than grieving thee I quail,

'Since thou canst think, I yield!—now tell thy tale.'

Straight Burgundy speaks all; by love made blind,
Lost for one hour the honour of his mind,
Each sight, each circumstance, his lips pourtray'd,
Twilight's thick gloom, the orchard's conscious shade,
The spaniel, harbinger of love's behest,
The knight, to Vergy's beauteous bosom press'd.
Each word the Dutchess heard her lord reveal,
Shot thrilling through her heart like pointed steel;
Yet firm dissimulation deftly hung
With many a blandishment, her faithless tongue;
Her soul the while breathes vengeance, and, imbrued
Already in her rival's vital blood,
O'er one tremendous thought broods day and night,
Till hours seem years, seem ages, in its sight.
Thus hours, and days, and lingering weeks are gone,
Till the high feast of Pentecost comes on:
Then Burgundy his plenar pomp displays,
Magnificent, as wont, for many days:

Throng thither, bidden through his dukedom's bound,
High feudatory lords and dames renown'd;
And, with the rest, obedient to the call,
Comes Vergy, to adorn her uncle's hall.

Pale turn'd the guileful Dutchess at the sight
With a strange shivering of malign delight;
Then with such love as malice well can feign,
Greets, once and oft, the Lady-Castellain.
But when, the banquet o'er, the dames withdrew,
To prank them for the dance with bravery new,
'Dames!' she begins, 'let each one's heart be gay!
'Leap, like our twinkling feet, this festive day!
'For you, fair niece! I fear me not; in this
'Trust we your gentle friend is not remiss.'
'Lady, mine aunt!' sweet Vergy meek replies,
'I trow not, soothly, whom your words devise:
'Friends have I none but what may well be known,
'Meet for mine uncle's honour and mine own.'

'So ween I,' quoth the Dutchess, 'dainty niece!
'Those who are practis'd in affairs like these,
'Who train their spaniels with such wondrous skill,
'Need never publish aught beyond their will.'

The speech, for none its secret meaning guess'd,
Dropp'd from her lips, unheeded by the rest:
On to the hall with buoyant mirth they ran,
And the blithe frolick of the dance began.

But, far far otherwise, in Vergy's soul
Shame, sorrow, ill-restrain'd, tempestuous roll.
At hand a sumptuous wardrobe's mute recess,
Where seem'd no eye to witness her distress,
She spied, and in she turn'd; nor did she mark,
For the lone taper scarce dispell'd the dark,
One damsel of the household seated there;
But burst into a flood of full despair:
Loose on a couch her reckless limbs were thrown,
And thus broke forth her loud-lamenting moan.

'O!—Agolane is false!—and I betray'd!
'My secret in perfidious purchase paid,
('Dear dreadful secret dreadfully reveal'd!)
'Won the proud dame of Burgundy to yield.
'To me, then, feign'd fallacious love was given;
'Yet I, how true my love—thou know'st it, heaven!
'How? sweet my friend! O how offending? aught
'Now, or before she lov'd, has Vergy wrought
'To merit so stern doom? our mystic vows
'Bewray'd, and I abandon'd by my spouse!
'I, had the power who fram'd me, to mine eyes
'Spread forth the boon of opening paradise,
'O how would I have shunn'd the heavenly gain,
'If to be bought with loss of Agolane!
'Thy presence was my happiness, my worth,
'My prime sole joyance on this globe of earth;
'And when I might not see thee, fancy wrought
'Dear visionary scenes of blissful thought.

'O, mightiest love!—when, seated by my side,
'He clasp'd me in his arms, and call'd me bride,
'Call'd me, in tones time never shall erase,
'Dame of his soul, and mistress of his days,
'So fascinating sweet, my fainting spright
'Seem'd as it would have fled for mere delight;
'Could I have then believ'd me thus forlorn?
'Shunn'd, hated, object of his wrath and scorn?
'I ween'd through life his love unchang'd to see,
'For such full sure I felt my own would be!
'And when his last sad hour at length were come,
'I too had gladly died, and join'd him in the tomb!
'Then let us now life's brittle gift resign,
'Since Agolane now lives not longer, mine!
'My spotless loyalty high heaven will heed,
'And pity wretch forlorn, untimely deed.
'O may my spright endure none other pain
'But sight of blessings shower'd on Agolane!

'Ungrateful!—I forgive!—death sweetly sent!
'In thought how I have lov'd, I die content!'
Here fades upon her cheek the leaf of rose,
And Vergy's brilliant eyes for ever close.
Once only she assays (as 'twere to speak
Her last last love, ere yet her heart should break,)
Once only, calling up life's minish'd power,
With outspread arms to clasp her absent paramour:
Then on the couch sinks down; her heaving breast
Breathes its last sigh, and all her pains are ceas'd.
Poor Agolane, the while, the dames among
Leads the gay mazes of the dance along:
Yet seems him that the minutes slowly move,
And still with wandering eyes he seeks his love:
At length alarm succeeds to first surprize,
And to the Duke with troubled cheer he hies:
Bold Burgundy spake nought, but led the way
Where, as in sleep, extended Vergy lay:

O! what a spectacle for love to scan!

(As to the spot with trembling speed he ran,)

Pale loosen'd members, nostrils void of breath,

And lips now freezing at the touch of death.

—'How! how!' he cries;—but, ere he ceas'd, arose

The unnotic'd witness of his lady's woes;

Simply the maid unfolds whate'er had pass'd;

How Vergy wail'd, and how she breath'd her last.

Now all is seen too plain:—'O, best!' he cries,

'O, first in loyal love's eternal ties!

'So thou affection's excellence hast shown!

'So I repaid!—so thou endur'd alone!

'Yet am I not quite vile; one honest deed,

'Of just though late avengement, shall succeed.'

He spoke, and, reaching from the wall, assay'd

And from its costly scabbard pluck'd a blade,

Leap'd on its thrilling point with dauntless breast,

And at his lady's feet sunk down to rest.

With terror in her speed, and haggard eyes,
Straight to the hall the menial damsel flies,
Seeks out bold Burgundy with panting breath,
And to his ear unfolds, the double death.

Awhile, when first the fearful sight he view'd,
A motionless, mute, senseless pause ensued;
Then fury found its issue; grimly gor'd,
Forth from his liegeman's breast he snatch'd the sword,
Shook the keen steel, with steaming life-blood red,
On to his consort hied, and briefly said:
'Dame! late with thee I dreadful compact made!
'Death, were uxorious Burgundy betray'd:
'Now mark how steadfastly I keep my word!'—
He spoke, and to her heart he struck the sword.

She at his feet sank down; fears seize on all,
And shrieks re-echoing fill the vaulted hall.
The dance broke off, the guests assembled round,
Sad Burgundy recounts, with sobs profound,

With tears, that, as they streak'd his visage pale,
Wrung precious drops from all who heard the tale;
The secret love; the lamentable bane;
And Vergy's broken heart; and self-slain Agolane:
And, while he spake, on one funereal bier
Mute pages bore, with sorrow-stricken cheer,
Up the long pavement, side by side, supine
The pair, whom death itself might not disjoin.

Next sun beheld them to one common grave
Pass, with such pomp as sovereigns wont to have:
And soon, by craftsmen skill'd in choice device,
Was rear'd a monument of mickle price,
Beneath whose sculptur'd stone their corses lie:
Thus well ordain'd dejected Burgundy.
This duty satisfied, in contrite thought
Bent to atone the evils he had wrought,
Straightway he takes the cross, seeks ocean's strand,
Sets forth in pilgrimage to Holy-Land,

And there, bow'd down beneath repentant shame,
Among the Templar-knights enrolls his name.
Still, with a chiding voice that never paus'd,
Clung round his mind the misery he had caus'd;
His port told grief too mighty to beguile;
Nor, thenceforth, was he ever seen to smile.

The Battle of Carnival and Lent.

THE BATTLE OF CARNIVAL AND LENT.

My worthy Sirs, no longer may I rest
To hold as hidden treasure in my breast,
A strange adventure, in its time I trow
Known far and wide, howe'er forgotten now.
My toilsome zeal the dormant record brings,
A legend suited to the feasts of kings;
And true—but this I trust I need not say;
Known am I to all here this many a day;

And twenty marks of silver may not buy
Your faithful minstrel to devise a lie.
In Paris, erst, for strength and splendour fam'd,
The royal Louis plenar court proclaim'd:
From all parts met the congregating host,
(For 'twas the solemn feast of Pentecost,)
Some to contribute gladness, some to share;
Join feastful revelry, or sportive war.
Far o'er the rest in might, of rival fame,
Two princes with their numerous menials came:
The one hight Carnival, whose wide command
Proud dukes and monarchs own'd through every land:
Lov'd was he much by all, in friends much bless'd,
And sure to win renown among the best.
To him all opposite, of fishy scent,
The poor man's foe, advanc'd the felon Lent:
Ruler of pools, and streams, and lakes, and seas;
And idoliz'd by monks of all degrees:

Still, at their noontide meal, or evening board,
O'er these in spacious abbeys sovereign lord.
This last, though little priz'd, though few are known,
Like those of Beauvaisis or of Olonne,
So humoursome in diet as to wish
To change a fatted bullock for a fish;
Yet, since to court he came with brave display
Of salmon in his train, and thorny ray,
Found honourable welcome; plac'd on high
With the prime guests at this festivity.
Disastrous preference!—how hence ensued
Prodigious conflict, and far-sounding feud,
Shall soon be told: how Carnival's quick sense
Ill brook'd his rival's strange pre-eminence;
Incens'd, his ireful soul's ungovern'd heat
Blaz'd forth amain in contumelious threat;
It reach'd his proud antagonist; and pale
With deadliest wrath at such injurious tale,

He, to his foe advancing, bade prepare
For war, for terrible and bloody war,
Meet for such argument, no end to know
But in the full perdition of the foe.

From Paris, straight, inspir'd with like intent,
Each to his realm the hostile chieftains went!
No toil they spare, impatient of delay
In preparation vast of arm'd array.
Swift as a shaft the silvery herring glides
To rouse the vassal myriads of the tides;
And, as the travers'd deep was heard to ring,
With the foul insult to their suzerain king,
All, from the matchless whale's unwieldy form
To the brisk fry that in the shallows swarm,
Fir'd at the summons, join, a vengeful host,
And quit the unpeopled waters for the coast.

Not less the world terrene, wood, hill, and plain,
Where Carnival extends his ample reign,

Sounds with the merlin's cry; and straight from far
The feudatories screaming throng to war.
Pale watchet herons in solemn flight arise,
Bitterns, and cranes, and mantling sweep the skies:
Each inlet to the sea, each creek, is barr'd
By clamorous ducks with sleepless watch and ward;
By stately swans, with necks erect and tall,
A long-extended line of snowy wall,
A boom athwart the wave: in serried ranks
Sheep, swine, and hares, and rabbits, line the banks.
Above, all birds of heath and champaign bare
With hurtling pinions flap the loaded air;
Plovers of various kind, and russet dyes,
By ponderous bustards led of giant size.
The rear-guard tame villatick fowl compose,
Fat geese, fat capons, in well-order'd rows;
The peacock, of his sparkling plumage proud,
And dove, with warlike virtues least endow'd.

Of craven courage, yet in numbers bold,
Their course, with shouts discordant, on they hold;
Rend the light air, with loud incessant cry,
And chant presaging lays of victory.
Arm'd cap-a-pie, on signal vengeance bent,
On a stout mullet rides imperious Lent:
His shield a cheese, a trenchant sole his blade,
His prick-spurs of well temper'd fishbone made:
A ray's stiff hide his cuirass'd corse adorns,
With tubercles all rough, and horrent thorns:
And, hard at hand, beneath the general's eye,
Pil'd stores are seen, and strange artillery;
Dried fruits, milk, butter, cheeses many a row;
With peas and chesnuts to annoy the foe.
Oppos'd, upon a stag of branching beams,
Stout Carnival's high crest incessant gleams;
A wild-boar's head with grinning tusks, enchas'd
In a firm crust of well compacted paste,

Serves for the warriour's helm; a peacock proud,
Perch'd on its summit, towers above the crowd:
With ruling curb he seems his beast to hold;
His heel a bird's beak arms for spurs of gold.

Now meet the monarchs twain: now on they go,
Each with resistless swoop upon his foe:
But thronging bands soon start from either side,
Close the mid space, the bickering chiefs divide;
These struggling, both are borne asunder far,
And the main battles join in deadly war.

First, in the dubious coil, the capons boast
Their floundering foes driv'n backward from the coast.
Ill could the whitings pale, of feeble might,
Endure such horny beaks in equal fight:
Roll'd o'er and o'er, their shatter'd squadrons flee,
And hide their dastard doings in the sea.

To stay such rout, or e'er it spread more wide,
Lo, proudly buoyant, through the surging tide

The many-colour'd mackerel cleaves his way,
And, arm'd with jagged spines, the puissant ray.
Then straight, at signal heard, a hideous hail
Showers on the foe, and makes the stoutest quail;
Their twanging bows the finny archers bend,
Dried figs, nuts, apples, through mid-air descend;
On rush broad turbots, breams with scales of gold,
And keen-tooth'd congers in huge volumes roll'd;
On wind the sinuous eels, a wily band,
And foil at will the chieftains of the land;
Their bony legs in living fetters bound,
Down fall the doughtiest warriours to the ground.
Each deed to sing, to note each worthy's praise,
Would ask the toil of seven successive days;
Yet shall my strain record, how, prime in arms,
Vast thirst of fame a youthful salmon warms;
He, in his valour peerless and alone,
Dire feats achieves, and prodigies unknown;

Around him pours destruction like a flood,
And deluges the dusky earth with blood.
And now, victorious, the aquatick host
Drove back their foes, and well-nigh won the coast;
When, quacking loud for aid, the mallards' cry
Two gray herons heard, and up they soar'd on high:
Four merlins join'd them as in air they wheel'd,
And down all pounce like lightning on the field.
Bold bitterns in their rear, with many a crane,
Spread carnage wide, and glut their maws with slain:
While, by the uncouth peril rous'd at length,
The sluggish ox puts forth his giant strength;
Unwieldy on he comes, his trampling tread
Bears down whole files, and crushes all the dead:
Unwonted tremblings seize the aquatick line,
And the faint host recoils beneath the brine.
Their wary king, who read that day's defeat
Irrevocable, timely sounds retreat:

And now heaven's beam was gone: indignant Lent
Toils through the night, on death or conquest bent;
Joins threats with praises, promises with prayer,
And wins his wavering squadrons back to war.
Not less stout Carnival his bands survey'd,
And told sure conquest o'er a foe dismay'd;
When, fraught with strange event, day burst the gloom,
And stamp'd the rival kings' perpetual doom.
Lo! where, with many a brave one, boon and gay
Great Christmas lordly guides his proud array!
Loud shouts, symphonious song, his course attend;
To Carnival he hies, a welcome friend.
Through Lent's pale host the thrilling clamour rolls,
And aggravated dread appals their souls:
But when returning spies at length reveal'd
The new confederate in the unequal field,
Unnerv'd, froze up with terror, reckless all
Of their liege sovereign, straight their weapons fall;

'Peace!'—rings around, the doubling peals increase,
And the vast world of waters echoes 'Peace!'
Urg'd by his people's cry, reluctant Lent
Straight to the foe a suppliant envoy sent:
On to their chiefs the guards his legate bring,
To take stern sentence from their haughty king;
'Eternal banishment! thence never more
'With aspect lean to sully Christian shore.'
Such doom severe the barons grieve to see;
Then, with their monarch, change that first decree,
And grant these terms of peace:—'By full consent
'All Christendom this homage cedes to Lent:—
'Full forty days, when spring-times reappear,
'And two in seven throughout the changeful year:
'Yet this not absolute; those times of fast
'All Christian folk shall grace their plain repast,
'(As through the general year,) piscivorous still,
'With milk, with crudled cheese; and feed their fill.'

Such was the wondrous strife, and such the fruit;
And Lent to Carnival did vassal suit.

The Road to Paradise.

BY RUTEBEUF.

AN EXTRACT.

THE ROAD TO PARADISE.

I.

As late in slumber lapt my limbs were laid,
While fantasy held empire o'er my mind,
It seem'd, in pilgrim's russet weed array'd,
Forth from my home I far'd; my steps inclin'd
Those blissful realms of Paradise to find
Whose path is strait, and rude with briar and stone:
Lusty I felt, and young, and left behind
Of feebler wights returning, many a one,
Whose hearts for toil did fail; so I remain'd alone.

II.

Oft to the left, with flowerets gaily dight,
A grassy footway turn'd, and smooth to tread;
And thither, cozen'd by such tempting sight,
My fellow-pilgrims all were wandered;
Albe the end was full of dole and dread,
A bottomless abyss, the dire abode
Of damned ghosts, and mansion of the dead.
There them I saw on turf with daisies strow'd;
But I right onward hied the narrow toilsome road.

III.

Thus I arriv'd where stood a city fair,
Yet simple sad it seem'd, and desolate:
Celestial Piety resided there;
And forth she came to meet me at the gate:
Kindly she offer'd to become my mate,
And be my sure conductress on the way,
For yet (she told,) my toil might nought abate;

And many deadly foes around there lay
My weary feet to snare, and heedless eyes betray.

IV.

So on I pass'd the rugged road along,
Accompanied by her, my heavenly guide,
Till suddenly my gaze, with wonder strong,
Was fix'd upon the gorgeous house of Pride:
On a high mound, extending far and wide
Its glittering front magnificently wrought
Rose eminent, as though it heaven defied;
But all behind, surpassing human thought,
In wasteful ruin lay, and crumbling into nought.

V.

Himself, the owner of this lordly pile,
Would sundry garbs assume, as lik'd him best
In guise a bishop now, anotherwhile
A sleek archdeacon, or some meaner priest;
Provost anon, or bailiff little bless'd:

And all mankind he did alike disdain,
Nor, humbled oft, he e'er the more surceas'd;
While, all around, the courtiers of his train
Stood, deck'd with costly crowns, and silk of scarlet grain.

VI.

Not far beyond I saw where Choler stood,
With sparkling eyes, and visage fiery red,
Gnashing his teeth amain, as he were wood,
And wreaking on himself his purpose dread:
Whether, as seem'd, his fated prey were fled,
Or that for ever thus himself he bore;
But still he stamp'd, and rag'd, and smote his head,
And from his scalp his matted locks he tore,
Till all his talons foul were stain'd with spirting gore.

VII.

Far in the winding of a sickly vale,
I spied where, in the centre of her hall,

Sat Avarice, with visage marr'd and pale,
Upon a coffer, crouching like a thrall:
With double-bolting lock was fasten'd all
Her dank abode, nor entrance might you see
Save one small postern in the flinty wall;
And in her clutch she grip'd its massy key.
Her house was roof'd throughout with wondrous masonry—

VIII.

For all of magnet, or of like rare stone,
Yet steel attracting nought, but only gold,
Its beams were wrought, and girders everichone;
And there her captive vassals she controll'd
In prisons vast of ever-during cold:
On piled ingots sat the meagre crew;
The heap still crumbling from beneath them roll'd;
These grasp, and strive, and mickle toil renew,
Yet evermore the winged metal upward flew.

IX.

In the deep bottom of the furthest dell,
Envy abode, engompass'd all with brakes;
And, as mine author Ovid limneth well,
Suck'd up the venom of her deadly snakes;
Nor ever she her privy den forsakes,
Save to espy how all her neighbours speed:
Weep they and groan? for very joy she quakes;
But laugh they, sing they, hands and hearts agreed?
Home hies she, wobegone; her spright is sad indeed.

X.

From her not far apart his sojourn made,
Stretch'd on his bed of down, unsightly Sloth,
All in a canon's vestments misarray'd;
And at the warning chime of matins wroth,
Loudly he rail'd at bell and bellman both;
Ne nathemore would rise, ne deign to look
Up from his couch; for he was passing loath

Thence to be rous'd; but if for call of cook
He to the banquet hied, and off his slumber shook.

XI.

And hard beside lay brutish Gluttony,
That wallowing toss'd and sought for ease amain;
He look'd as one that was about to die,
All swoln and bloated with exceeding pain
Of yesternight's debauch, now rued in vain;
Yet still his thoughts were on his tavern feast,
Thither the wretched thrall would wend again,
And cram his maw like to a senseless beast;
Begirt he was with many a monk and many a priest.

XII.

Now, right against my view, some way before,
A lordly manor-house, as seem'd, arose;
A churlish porter stood to guard the door;
And empty-handed guests he rudely throws
Back from the wicket, still admitting those

Who bring the wonted tribute for his queen:
So in they fare, yet much their gesture shows
Shame, as the gallants fain would not be seen;
Full soon to vanish quite in dusky shades obscene!

XIII.

Them greets the dame with goodly-seeming guise,
But 'tis to spoil them of their bravery gay:
Come they as knights? she makes their coursers prize:
Back the dismounted caitiffs slink away,
Sore shent, and chaf'd to be that harlot's prey:
Full seldom won a second course to try:
Or, if by sugar'd base desires astray
Once drawn again, they know repentance nigh!
Such, Wantonness her court doth keep continually.

XIV.

Thus, pass'd the purlieus of intemperance,
The storehouses and sties of vice and shame,

On, where the Virtues dwell, I straight advance,

Through heavenly guidance sav'd from blot of blame.

O! what I look'd on, thither as I came!—

The house of Candour, desert grown, and bare;

Faint Liberality's dissolving frame:—

Till, for my shrift as I at last prepare,

Lo, plain in ken the road to Paradise is there!

NOTES.

NOTES

TO

HUE'LINE AND EGLANTINE.

THIS tale has been compiled by M. Le Grand from three distinct fabliaux, in each of which the subject is the same, viz. a difference between two ladies enamoured, the one of a knight, the other of an ecclesiastick, who dispute about the comparative merits of their admirers, and finally repair to the *court of love* for a decision. M. Le Grand has principally followed the first, (Huéline and Eglantine,) as far as his MSS. (which was imperfect) would carry him, and has interwoven such little ornaments as could easily be assimilated from the two other fabliaux.

Page 3, Line 5. '*To carles, to faitours, to unfolden*
'*clear*
'*Love's mystic lore, doth much that lore profane.*'

The words carle, chorle, or churl, and villain, were among our ancestors the usual appellations for coun-

trymen. Faitour (*faiteor*, old F. perhaps from the Latin, *fatiscor*) seems to have been synonymous with the modern French word *porte-faix*; but all these terms were commonly used in a bad sense, and to denote a compound of ignorance and idleness. The serfs of those days were the only labourers, and probably not very industrious; and their employers were certainly not very liberal.

Page 5, Line 7. '*As a fair tree, by all with joy*
'*beheld*,' &c.

This elegant comparison, differing widely from the general style and character of the fabliaux, is perhaps taken from the well-known and beautiful simile in Catullus: 'Ut flos in septis, &c. &c. Sic virgo dum intacta manet,' &c.

Page 6, Line 16. '*Save with a reverend clerk, for*
'*discipline renown'd.*'

The word *clerk* is usually employed by our old authors to signify a man of learning; in this place, however, it means an ecclesiastick.

Page 7, Line 16. '*And leaves his weltering band-*
'*roll in the wound.*'

Lances were frequently adorned, near the point, with a little flag or streamer: this was called a bandroll (*banderolle*), or pencel (*pennoncel*).

Page 8, Line 13. . . . . '*parted ghost.*'

See Shakspeare's Henry VIth—

'Oft have I seen a timely-parted ghost,

'Of ashy semblance, meagre, pale, and bloodless.'

Page 9, Line 6. . . . . '*studious cloister's pale.*'

See Milton's Il Penseroso, l. 154—

'But let my due feet never fail

'To walk the studious cloister's pale.'

Page 11, Line 16. '*A hundred livres sterling at*
'*the least.*'

The word *sterling* had three different meanings among the early French writers. As applied to weight, it signified the smallest division of the ounce: as a piece of money, it expressed the old English penny, (of which 160 were coined from a mark of silver,) and was equal in efficacy to about 15 pence of the present day: and lastly, it expressed the standard fineness of the metals used in coinage.

Page 12, Line 16. '*Sweet fence of many a lily*
'*twin'd with rose.*'

The manuscript of Huéline and Eglantine is here defective, the rest of the tale being torn away. M. Le Grand has supplied the deficiency from the fabliau of Florence and Blanchefleur; and the translator, to avoid quenching any interest that his readers may

have begun to feel for the heroines of the story, by the introduction of strangers in their room, has represented Huéline and Eglantine as assuming the names of Florence and Blanchefleur, on their arrival at the mansion of love.

Page 15, Line 6. . . . . *'the court's award.'*

The reader is presented, in this fabliau, with two very curious institutions of the middle ages; the sittings of the *courts of love*, and the practice of judicial combats. The courts of love have already been cursorily noticed in the preface. According to the Aristotelian philosophy, as it was then understood, all particular truths were necessarily contained in, and deducible from, some general axioms; and consequently, the progress of every science was supposed to depend on the subtlety and accuracy with which these axioms were sifted, and their consequences investigated. As such an opinion necessarily led to endless disputes, it became requisite, on important subjects, that where evidence and conviction were unattainable, the controversy should be settled by authority. Therefore, as the passion of love was employed as a principal engine in education, and considered as the great source of heroism, it was thought necessary that courts should be erected for the purpose of taking cognizance of all

differences and disagreements between lovers, with full power to summon the culprits and their evidences, and to pass definitive sentence in all cases of gallantry. The decrees of these courts were regularly reported, and these reports had their commentators, who endeavoured to point out their conformity to the principles of the Roman law, or to the decisions of the fathers of the church, and who illustrated them by quotations from the Greek and Latin poets. The famous thesis of the Cardinal de Richelieu on the subject of love, is a curious monument of the importance which, even in his time, was attached to such discussions. Alphonso King of Arragon, and Richard Cœur-de-Lion, occasionally condescended to preside in these extraordinary tribunals; and the famous Frederic Barbarossa instituted in his dominions, a court of love, in imitation of those in France. It is reported, that when the Counts of Vintimille and Tende paid a visit to Pope Innocent VI. at Avignon, that pontiff invited them to assist at the pleadings in a court of love which was then held with unusual magnificence. But the most famous and solemn tribunal of this kind was erected under the auspices of the beautiful and profligate Isabella of Bavaria, the queen of Charles VI. of France. This establishment had its presidents, coun-

sellors, masters of requests, auditors, &c. and these employments were held by princes of the blood, by the greatest barons in the kingdom, by grave magistrates, and even by the most respectable dignitaries of the church.

Page 15, Line 14. '*The royal wren, &c.*'

The French name for the wren is *roitelet*, or *petty king*.

Page 16, Line 7. '*Fierce on the ground he hurl'd*
'*his gauntlet down.*'

In this challenge of the nightingale, and the singular duel which follows, we have an exact representation of a judicial combat. Such combats, perhaps, would not now be considered as the happiest contrivance for the investigation of truth, but they are a natural consequence of the opinions which prevailed in the middle ages. The various *ordeals*, by fire, water, &c. were instituted on the supposition, that God being personally interested in the triumph of innocence and virtue, could not fail of interfering in their favour when they were unjustly aspersed; and hence the nobility, who respected no virtue so much as valour, were naturally led to infer, that Providence could not fail to bless the arms of the bravest, and consequently most virtuous, champion.

The forms of trial being completed, if it appeared that the resources of human sagacity were unequal to the discovery of the truth, the two combatants, with crucifixes in their hands, were led into the lists by sponsors appointed for the occasion, being dressed in tunics of leather, or linen, and armed according to their condition; that is to say, if persons of low rank, with a stick and a shield; and if knights, with all the usual armour and weapons. They then mounted a scaffold, on which were seated the judges and the marshall. There, an eclesiastick having previously explained to them the dreadful consequences of perjury, they were ordered to kneel, and to swear three several times on the holy Evangelists, the one, that the accused was really guilty of the crime imputed to him; the other, that his accuser was a '*false and disloyal traitor, and that he lied in his throat.*' They also swore that they were not provided with any amulet or charm which could give them an unfair advantage. They then descended from the scaffold; the marshall threw down his glove; the herald cried, '*Do your duty,*' and the combat began.

The unsuccessful champion being considered as criminal, he was instantly delivered over to the execu-

[illegible] and hanged; unless the king thought fit to remit [illegible] which case he was stripped of his armour piece by piece, was led backwards out of the lists, and then outlawed, and declared infamous. A champion who fell in the combat, was stripped naked, and his body either hanged on a gibbet, or treated with every sort of indignity. Every part of his armour was broken in pieces, and even his horse was condemned to a strange sort of degradation, having his tail cut off, and thrown on a dunghill.

During the combat, the spectators were prohibited, under the severest penalties, from making any noise, or using any gesture, that might encourage or dismay either of the combatants. Persons incapable of supporting their own cause by force of arms, as women, minors, infirm persons, or ecclesiasticks, were permitted to have champions, whose zeal in the cause they undertook to defend, was effectually secured, by subjecting them, if unsuccessful, to the same punishments which were incurred by the principals.

It occasionally happened, that disputes which were totally unconnected with the decision of any criminal or civil process, were decided by judicial combats, merely because they appeared so embarrassing, as to

be incapable of any other determination. Thus, in the empire, they undertook to decide a great question of jurisprudence; and, in Spain, the respective merits of the Roman and Mozarabic liturgies, &c. Those who wish for more information on this subject, will find it in Montesquieu's 'Spirit of Laws.'

Page 17, Line 2. '*Bright marygold compos'd the 'gambeson.*'

The gambeson (which has been mentioned in a former note) was a sort of doublet, or waistcoat, composed of many folds of linen, stuffed with cotton, wool, or hair, quilted, and commonly covered with leather. Although it was chiefly worn under the coat of mail, to protect the body from being bruised by the strokes of the sword or lance, it appears to have been sometimes worn as a surcoat, and richly ornamented. In Grose's Treatise on Armour are quoted some lines from the 'Siege of Karlaverok,' which describe the gambeson in this manner;

Meinte heaume et meinte chapeau burni
Meinte *riche gamboison* guarni
De soie, &c. &c.

Lydgate seems to have intended to represent the outward armour of Patroclus as composed of a gambeson,

'In which there was full many riche stone
'Both of rubies and of saphyres ynde;
'For that dayes, plainly as I finde,
'Kinges, lordes, and knightes, (this no naye)
'To battayle went *in their best araye.*'

NOTE

TO

GRISELIDIS.

'THIS tale is so well known (says M. Le Grand) 'that I almost hesitated to publish it. I only offer it 'to my French readers as I should offer, to an ho- 'nourable family, the original records of titles long 'usurped by others. Duchat, in his notes on Rabe- 'lais, had already informed the publick that the story 'of Griselidis occurs, for the first time, in a MSS. en- 'titled, "Le Parement des Dames;" and on this 'authority, doubtless, M. Manni, in his Illustrazione 'di Boccacio, has restored to France the honour of its 'invention.

'In the 14th century the prose translations of it 'were very numerous. I have myself met with above 'twenty different versions under the several names of, '"*Miroir des Dames;*" "*Enseignement des Dames;*" '"*Exemple des Bonnes et Mauvaises Femmes,*" &c. &c.'

How far this claim of M. Le Grand, in favour of his countrymen, may be well founded, the present translator has no means of ascertaining. The celebrity of the tale, however, during the 14th century, was almost unrivalled. Boccace gave it in his Decameron: Petrarch, who professes to have heard it with pleasure many years before Boccace's publication, translated it into Latin in the year 1373: and in England, Chaucer, who copies Petrarch, assigns it to his Clerke of Oxenforde, in the Canterbury Tales. From that time to the present day it has frequently appeared in prose, and verse, and in almost every known language, so that it may be presumed that it has never quite lost its original popularity.

Against the decision of public opinion, so frequently confirmed, it is now too late to appeal; and yet there are, perhaps, few minds in which the concluding triumph of Griselidis will excite so much pleasure as to compensate the pain occasioned by her sufferings. An English reader is naturally led to compare this tale with our beautiful national ballad on the Nut-brown Maid, because both these compositions were intended to describe a perfect female character, exposed to the severest trials; submitting without a murmur to unmerited cruelty; disarming her tor-

mentor by gentleness and patience; and finally, recompensed for her virtues by transports rendered more exquisite by her sufferings.

But though the intention be apparently the same, the conduct of the two pieces is very different. In the Nut-brown Maid, the whole is comprehended in one short scene. The cruel scrutiny of her feelings, which she is made to endure, is suggested by the jealousy of a lover, anxious to explore the whole extent of his empire over her heart. His doubts are, perhaps, natural; and he is only culpable because he consents to purchase the assurance of his own happiness at the expence of the temporary anguish, and apparent degradation of his mistress. But she is prepared for the exertion of her firmness by slow degrees; she is strengthened by passion; by a consciousness of the desperate step she had already taken; and by the conviction that every sacrifice was tolerable which insured her claim to the gratitude of her lover, and was paid as the price of his happiness: her trial is short, and her recompence permanent. For his doubts and jealousy she perhaps found an excuse in her own heart; and in the moment of her exultation and triumph, in the consciousness of her own excellence, and the prospect of unclouded security, she

might easily forgive him for having evinced that the idol of his heart was fully deserving of his adoration.

Gautier, on the contrary, is not blinded by love, or tormented by jealousy. He had been long married to a blameless and obedient wife. He becomes a father; and this new tie of affection, which would have softened the ferocity of a common savage, suggests to him the project of practising, on the innocent partner of his bed, the most ingenious, because the most durable, species of torture, that deliberate cruelty ever prompted. His curiosity is interested in knowing whether conjugal obedience can be carried so far as to suppress, in the breast of a mother, the tenderest affections of nature; and, lest his experiment should not be sufficiently conclusive, he calmly waits till Griselidis, by suckling her infant daughter, shall have become more sensibly alive to the horror of the separation he meditates. The child is removed: Griselidis believes it to be murdered by command of her husband; yet her submission is still unimpaired. But he had now acquired a taste for experiment. The victim of his caresses and his cruelty becomes again a mother, only to become doubly wretched. A third repetition of this disgusting scene is necessary to satisfy the inquisitive Gautier that the wretch, whose youth he had

deliberately doomed to anguish, and whose beauty had faded in his poisonous embraces, had deserved to find a better husband. The recompence of her unexampled patience is a mere permission to wear a coronet without further molestation from her tormentor.

That the story is interesting is certainly proved by experience; but it may be doubted whether the emotions to which it gives rise, are at all different from those which would be excited by the view of an execution on the rack. Perhaps the character of Griselidis may have been suggested by the history of some female martyr; (although Noguier, in his Hist. de Thoulouse, asserts, that this phœnix actually existed about the year 1102;) but the merit of resignation depends much on its motive; and the cause of morality is not much promoted by bestowing, on a passive submission to capricious tyranny, the commendation which is only due to an humble acquiescence in the dispensations of Providence.

NOTE

TO

THE COUNTESS OF VERGY.

THIS story is copied in the 'Contes de la *Reine* '*Marguerite de Navarre*,' where it forms the 70th novel. It is also inserted in the tragical histories of '*Belleforest*,' (from the Italian of Bandello,) and has been since expanded into a novel of the modern form, with the addition of several anecdotes concerning the reign of Philippe Auguste. The last-mentioned work (which is attributed to Le Commandeur de Vignacourt) was well received, and passed through two editions; and this success has occasioned its admission into the *Bibliotheque de Campagne*.— (Vid. Vol. XIV.)

It has the appearance of being taken from some real anecdote, though the actors have been transferred from private life to the courts of Burgundy. The incident of the little dog, which is ingenious, will, per-

haps, remind the reader of the 'Petite Epingle,' in the romance of Jean de Saintré: and, in general, the tale exhibits a good picture of that mixture of gallantry and ferocity which distinguished the middle ages. The moral, which the author draws from it, is not very edifying. He is by no means solicitous that the nieces of dukes of Burgundy should preserve their chastity; but merely that those, whom they condescend to make happy, should carefully keep the secret to themselves.

NOTE

TO

THE BATTLE OF CARNIVAL AND LENT.

PAGE 89, Line 17. '*The peacock of his sparkling* '*plumage proud.*'

This tale may be considered as exhibiting the contents of a most copious larder in the 12th and 13th centuries. The turkey, for which the old world has been since indebted to America, of course does not appear; but it is singular that the pheasant should be wanting, because this bird was second in estimation to the peacock alone. The extravagant honours paid to both these birds in the feudal ages, are related at large by M. Le Grand, in his 'Histoire de la Vie Privée des 'Francais' (Paris, 1782), from which the following particulars are extracted:

'To mention the peacock (says he) in the private 'life of the French, is to write the panegyrick of that 'beautiful bird. Many families, and particularly that

'of Montmorency, bore the figure of a peacock, as a 'crest on their helmets. In the *courts of love*, held in 'the southern provinces, a crown composed of pea-'cock's feathers, was placed on the head of the suc-'cessful poet by one of the lady-judges, as the recom-'pence of his superiority. Among the old romances, 'the flesh of the peacock is celebrated as the 'Nutri-'ment of Lovers,' and the 'Viand of Worthies;' and 'indeed few solemn banquets were given by princes 'or nobles, in which the peacock was not the most 'distinguished dish.

'It was generally served up roasted; and the way 'in which this was done, is, happily for antiquarian 'epicures, still upon record. Instead of plucking the 'bird (says the complete housekeeper of former 'times), skin it carefully, so as not to damage the 'feathers; then cut off the feet; stuff the body with 'spices and sweet herbs; roll a cloth round the head; 'and then spit your bird. Sprinkle the cloth, all the 'time it is roasting, to preserve its crest. When it 'is roasted enough, tie the feet on again; remove the 'cloth; set up the crest; replace the skin; spread 'out the tail, and so serve it up.

'Some people (adds the reporter) instead of serv-'ing up the bird in the feathers, carry their magni-

'ficence so far as to cover their peacock with leaf-'gold: others have a *very pleasant way* of regaling 'their guests. Just before they serve up, they cram 'the beak of their peacock with wool, rubbed with 'camphor: then, when the dish is placed upon the 'table, they set fire to the wool, and the bird instantly 'vomits out flames like a little volcano.

'Even the ceremony of placing this bird upon the 'table was not intrusted to the usual attendants, but 'was the honourable office of some lady of rank and 'beauty. Followed by a train of females, and accom-'panied by a band of music, this queen of the feast 'pompously entered the hall, bearing the bird on a 'dish of gold or silver, and placed it before the master 'of the mansion, or before some guest most renowned 'for courtesy and valour. If the banquet succeeded 'a tournament, the conquering knight had a rightful 'preference; and was to exert his talents of carving 'and subdivision, so that all the company might taste 'the bird.

'This glorious destruction awakened such enthu-'siasm in the knightly carver, that it was usual for 'him to rise from his seat, and, with his hand extend-'ed over the bird, vow to undertake some daring en-'terprize of arms or love. The form of the oath on

'this occasion was,—'I vow to God, to the blessed 'Virgin, to the dames, and to the peacock, to, &c.' 'When he ceased, the dish was presented to the other 'guests in succession; and they vied with each other 'in the rashness and extravagance of their promises. 'This ceremony was called, the 'Vow of the Peacock' '(Vœu du Paon).

'Almost all that has been related of the peacock, is 'also applicable to the pheasant, which was likewise 'stiled a *noble* bird. This bird was presented at the 'tables of the great with equal pomp, covered with 'his plumage: and it was over a pheasant that the 'Duke of Burgundy, in 1453, made a vow to under-'take a crusade.'

NOTES

TO

THE ROAD TO PARADISE.

PAGE 101, Line 16. '*Provost anon, or bailiff little* '*bless'd.*'

Le Grand tells us, that the appointment of a bailiff, or seneschal, to the superintendance of a domain, originated in the ignorance of the great lords; who, being little versed in chicane, and even unable to understand many of the causes which were brought before them, made over to certain officers the *baillie*, or guardianship of their subjects. These bailiffs were originally charged with the administration of the revenues of their lords, as well as with the dispensation of justice; and they were also empowered to assemble, and to lead the tenants in battle. This important charge, which rendered them extremely unpopular, is now obsolete.

Page 102, Line 4. '*Stood deck'd with costly crowns,*
'*and silk of scarlet grain.*'

Scarlet, or crimson, having been at all times the distinctive colour of princes, is, of course (says M. Le Grand), attributed to the court of pride. The word *rogue* (continues he) derived from *rouge* (*red*), was formerly used in the sense of *proud* or *haughty*.

Page 103, Line 8. '*For all of magnet, or of like*
'*rare stone, &c.*'

This expression has given occasion to M. Le Grand to introduce a dissertation, which, though not much to the purpose (for it relates to the invention of the mariner's compass, which is no where mentioned in the poem), contains a fact that may probably be new to some readers, and is therefore worth transcribing. All the world knows that the invention of this useful instrument is usually attributed to *Flavio Gioia*, a native of Amalfi, in the kingdom of Naples, who is said to have published his discovery in 1302: but M. Le Grand insists that the magnetic property of the loadstone was known, and applied to the act of navigation, before the end of the 12th century, because an instrument for this purpose is mentioned in a satyrical work, called the *Bible Guyot*, written by *Guyot de Provins*, in the reign of Philippe Auguste.

The lines which he adduces in proof of his assertion are the following:

Un art font qui mentir ne peut,
Par la vertu de la *marniere*,
Une pierre laide et bruniere
Où li fers volontiers se joint
Ont: si esgardent le droit point;
Puis c'une aguile y ont touchie
Et en un festu l'ont couchié,
En l'eue la metent sans plus:
Et li festu la tient dessus.
Puis se tourne la pointe toute
Contre l'estoile . . . . .
. . . . . .
Quant la mer est obscure et brune,
Quant ne voit estoile ne lune,
Dont font à l'aguile alumer;
Puis n'ont il garde d'esgarer.

That is 'they make a contrivance which, through the 'virtue of the *marniere* (*i. e. mariniere, marine instru-* '*ment*) cannot deceive them. They have an ugly 'dark stone to which iron willingly attaches itself. 'They look for its right point (*i. e.* one of its poles), 'and then, when they have touched a needle with it, 'and fastened that needle to a piece of straw, they

'place it, without more preparation, in some water;
'and the straw supports the needle on the surface.
'Then the point turns itself towards the (north) star.
'When the sea is obscured and dark, and neither moon
'nor stars are to be seen, then they cause a light to
'be brought to the needle, and are then sure of not
'going astray.'

M. Le Grand, however, is not the first author of this remark; for Fauchet (Recueil de l'Origine de la Langue et Poesie Françoise, &c. page 91) quotes the first four lines, though somewhat differently. His reading is,

Un art font qui mentir ne puet
Par vertue de la *marinette*,
Une pierre *laide et noirette*,
Où li fers volontiers se joint.

Fauchet's quotation is also noticed by Bishop Huet, as Anderson has remarked in his History of Commerce.

On reviewing so cumbrous a body of notes, with a glossary of uncouth words, appended to a volume of

modern rhymes; the translator cannot but feel somewhat diffident of the publick reception. 'Yet,' (to adopt the words of Selden in his prefatory discourse to the notes in Drayton's Poly-Olbion,) 'for antique 'termes, so much as that way I offend is warranted by 'example of such, of whom to endevor imitation al-'lowes me more than the bare title of blameless.' 'Of the notes, permit mee thus much:—What the 'verse oft, with allusion, as supposing a full-knowing 'reader, lets slip; or in winding steps of personating 'fictions (as some times), so infolds, that suddaine 'conceipt cannot abstract a forme of the clothed 'truth: I have, as I might, illustrated. Brevity and 'plainenes (as the one endur'd the other) I have 'joyned; purposely avoyding frequent commixture of 'different language; and, whensoever it happens, the 'page, (specially for gentlewomen's sake,) sum-'marily interprets it, except where interpretation 'aides not.'

'Ingenuous readers, to you I wish your best de-'sires.' 'To gentlewomen and their loves is conse-'orated, all the wooing language, allusions to love-'passions, and sweet embracements feigned by the 'muse 'mongst hils and rivers: whatsoever tastes of

'description, battell, story, abstruse antiquity, and 'law of the kingdome; to the more severe reader. 'To the one, be contenting enjoyments of their auspi-'cious desires: to the other, happy attendance of their 'chosen muses.'

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

ALL the foregoing fabliaux had received Mr. Way's last corrections, and some of them were actually printed off before his death; but it appears that he intended to insert in the present work at least five more; viz. the Thicket of Thorn (Buisson d'Epines); the Crusaders; the Lay of Beatrice; the Gray Palfrey (le Palefroi Vair); and the Paradise of Love.

In the first of these, the Thicket of Thorn, he seems to have made very little progress; at least I have only been able to discover six stanzas, which, though very well written, would be read with little interest, because they contain only the opening of the tale. Indeed this fabliau, as abridged by M. Le Grand, is little more than a fragment, and was probably recommended to Mr. Way's notice only by the circumstance of its being one of the lays of Britany, and

so far connected with the literary history of our ancestors.

The fabliau of the Crusaders, by Rutebeuf, is much more curious. This minstrel, who was at once a poet and musician, is said to have lived till the year 1310, though he flourished (says M. Le Grand) during the reign of St. Louis, to whom many of his pieces are dedicated. It is well known that this monarch, the hero and martyr of the crusades, assumed the cross in the year 1246, notwithstanding the tears and entreaties of the queen, the remonstrances of his ministers, and even of many of his clergy, and in opposition to the wishes of all his subjects. This year is therefore assigned by M. Le Grand, with great appearance of probability, as the date of the following poem, in which Rutebeuf has comprised, under the form of a dialogue, nearly all the arguments that can be suggested on both sides of the question. The opinion of the poet himself is, indeed, very clearly announced; because, while the champion of the cross employs only those hackneyed arguments which had long since lost their efficacy, his antagonist displays a degree of ingenuity which we are surprised to find in the reasoning of a minstrel of the thirteenth century; ridicules the object and conduct of those absurd ex-

peditions with the keenest irony, and exposes, with much good sense and political sagacity, the ill effects which were produced by such holy enterprises on the morals as well as the happiness of Europe. But St. Louis, it seems, had already determined to take the cross, and Rutebeuf knew the character of that prince too well to form very sanguine hopes of shaking his resolution by the wittiest reflections that could be infused into a fabliau: he therefore did not chuse, by giving unwelcome advice, to risk the probable loss of a patron who, whether wise or foolish, was able to be of use to him. The expedient adopted by the minstrel for the purpose of satisfying the prince, without foregoing the amusement of indulging his own propensity to satire, is very curious. His *Non-crusader*, after over-throwing all the arguments of his antagonist, suddenly becomes a convert, and determines to take the cross, and to abandon all the comforts of this life for the purpose of working out his salvation by those very means of which he had so successfully exposed the absurdity.

M. Le Grand considers this device as extremely ingenious; though he admits, that such an abrupt violation of character is not very agreeable to the reader, whose taste, after all, ought, in some degree, to be

consulted by the poet. Those who subscribe to this last opinion will, perhaps, be satisfied with the following fragment, in which Mr. Way has given the most striking parts of this curious dialogue.

THE CRUSADERS.

CRUSADER.

Thou seest, my friend, of good and ill
To reason, and their bounds to know,
To us is dealt by sovereign will,
Alone of creatures here below;
And hence, so we employ our pains
To do the works which God ordains,
For us his bounty hath prepar'd,
Of peerless price, a sure reward.

Lo, now the fruitful hour at hand!
To thee the precious boon is given;
For Paynims waste the Holy Land,
And spoil the heritage of heaven.
Shall we such faithless works behold,
With craven courage, slack and cold?
How else, but to the giver's praise,
May we devote our wealth and days?

NON-CRUSADER.

I read thee right—thou holdest good,
To this same land I straight should hie,
And win it back with mickle blood,
Nor gain one foot of soil thereby.
While here, dejected and forlorn,
My wife and babes are left to mourn;
My goodly mansion rudely marr'd,
All trusted to my dogs to guard?

But I, fair comrade, well I wot,
An ancient saw, of pregnant wit,
Doth bid us 'keep what we have got;'
And, troth, I mean to follow it.
I cannot learn what part 'tis read,
That Christian folk shall so be fed;
Who soweth thus, I shrewdly guess,
Shall gather nought but emptiness.

CRUSADER.

Forth from thy groaning mother's womb,
Thou, naked helpless child, wast brought;
Yet see, how soon thou art become
Stout, lusty, lacking now for nought.

Then sure, if wealth for heaven we lose,
Heaven, hundred-fold, that wealth renews;
But paradise may never bless
The wretch who lives in idleness.

NON-CRUSADER.

Howbeit, my friend, of folk that toil,
And sweat almost their dear heart's-blood;
And all their days keep mighty coil,
To keep some store of this world's good:
Of such, I say, full oft from home,
On penance sent to holy Rome,
Asturia, or I wot not where,
Nor what befalls the caitiffs there,

I've seen a band of gallants brave,
To France returning all forlorn;
Without or waiting-wench or knave,
And naked, nigh, as they were born.
Now sure, it needs not cross the seas,
And play such losing games as these;
And bow one's flesh to servitude,
All for one's soul's immortal good!

I say, good brother, so you hold
Alone we purchase heavenly bliss:
For this a man must waste his gold;
And pass the boundless seas for this.
Now I maintain 'tis far most sage,
In peace to hold one's heritage;
And there that paradise obtain,
For which thou needs wilt cross the main.

CRUSADER.

Nay, now thy speech so lewdly sounds,
I scarce may sober answer deign:
Thou ween'st, forsooth, with hawks and hounds
To save thy soul, sans fleshly pain:
How much of martyrs' blood has flow'd
To win those seats in heavens' abode?
How many, this world's joys foregone,
And buried quick, in cloisters moan?

NON-CRUSADER.

Sire, by my fay, thou preachest well!
Thy words are brave; 'twere best thou go
To yon sequester'd silent cell,
And teach its lordly abbot so!

Those fattening deans would gladly hear;
Those prelates needs must lend an ear;
Such men, be sure, heaven's laws fulfill,
Devoted to their Maker's will!

On these his plenteous gifts he showers,
While we are told his wars to wage:
Their rents flow in, they dwell in bowers,
Nor, slumbering, note the tempest's rage.
Good faith, Sir, if the road to heaven
Be made so passing smooth and even,
The priest who changeth, wit must lack;
He ne'er shall find a readier track!

THE LAY OF BEATRICE.

M. Le Grand informs us, that the original of this lay is a poem of that species which, in modern French, is termed '*Romance*;' an appellation for which we have no correspondent name in English, though the sort of composition, which he defines to be 'a short 'poem composed of regular stanzas, and containing 'the recital of some love-adventure,' is sufficiently common, being one of the many species which we confound under the very indefinite name of Ballad.

He farther informs us, that these '*Romances*' were anciently distinguished by the particularity of having a *burthen* to each stanza, which was also, not unfrequently, the moral of the piece: and he believes that this mode of writing was invented by *Audefroi le Batard*, a Norman poet of the 13th century. The reader will recollect many examples of this metre in our early poets, who probably borrowed it from the French, but who have not generally applied it to the *recital of*

some love-adventure. In nearly all the ballads by Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and Occleve, which are to be found in Urry's edition of Chaucer, the stanzas are terminated by some proverbial, or popular saying; but these ballads are either moral, or satirical, or encomiastick, without any narrative.

M. Le Grand, however, though he has taken some pains to describe the composition of these romances, and has noticed the burthen of each, has neither thought it necessary to point out the divisions of the stanzas, nor to shew the application of the characteristick line to the several parts of the story. Indeed he has rather abridged than translated these lays; so that being totally deficient in all those details which are essential to the ballad character, they appear to differ from the longer fabliaux only by their want of incident, and poverty of contrivance. These are defects which Mr. Way has been unable to remedy; and, perhaps, had he lived to superintend the printing of this volume, he would have determined to suppress the following sketch of the Lay of Beatrice; instead of attempting to finish it from the very imperfect materials which his original afforded: but his papers having been intrusted to me for the sole purpose of

fulfilling his intentions, I have not thought myself at liberty to discard a poem which he had certainly composed with a view to its publication.

THE LAY OF BEATRICE.

Sadly to her chamber went,
There her bursting woes to vent,
There to yield her to despair,
Beatrice, the young, the fair.
For her weetless Sire's command
Late had pledg'd the damsel's hand
To Duke Henry: suzerain
O'er his large and fair domain:
But her heart whilere was won
By Count Hugh, and other none.
He, alas! in heedless hour,
Had cropp'd the damsel's virgin flow'r;
And the moons, that swiftly roll'd,
Nigh the fatal secret told,
When the lady, all apart,
Thus bewray'd her bleeding heart.

I.

'Ah me! with sorry cheer,
'How, how may I appear—

'I, thus dishonour'd, I Duke Henry's bride!
'Death, death shall set me free!
'My true love Hugh shall see
'These loyal arms embrace no lord beside.
'Ah me! the days true lovers do possess,
'Brief are they sure, and full of bitterness!

II.

'Yet wherefore doth he stay?
'Why hastes he not away
'My sire to sue, and win my willing hand.
'My life with shame must end,
'For thee disloyal friend,
'That first didst cause the strait wherein I stand.
'Ah me! the days true lovers do possess,
'Brief are they sure, and full of bitterness!'

A squire, it chanc'd, with age grown gray,
And trusty service many a day,
O'erheard the maid forlorn complain,
And hied him to beguile her pain.
To him she tells her sum of wo:
She wins him to her love to go;
To bid him haste, and names the hour
To snatch her from Duke Henry's pow'r.

Scarce Count Hugh the plight might hear
Of the maid he loves so dear,
When, to bear her succour strong,
With his knights he pricks along.
In the orchard's gloom she seats her,
There her gallant lover meets her:
'Shield me, shield me,' straight she cried,
'From my father's wrath and pride!
'Save in thee, and thee alone,
'Other hope I harbour none.'
'Never, Beatrice! my heart
'May from love of thee depart!
'Never, but with loss of life,
'Shall they rob me of my wife!'
(On his steed he seats her fast)
'Hence away! our griefs are past!'
Soon the flight, with tingling ears,
From his folk, Duke Henry hears;
And breathless all, and wood with ire,
Onward to seek the damsel's sire
Hies he straight, with menace dread,
On his vassal's faithless head.
He disclaiming concert quite,
Nothing privy to the flight;

First deluded, first beguil'd,
By his well-dissembling child,
Much was striving to assuage
His suzerain's enkindled rage,
When the damsel's mother, guessing
Love should cease from such confessing,
Told how she, of secret *prief**,
Long had ween'd her daughter's lief,
(Link'd with mutual love-knot true)
Was none other but Count Hugh.
Scarce Duke Henry heard the tale,
His changeful cheek grew deadly pale;
Jealousy chok'd up his breath,
And pronounc'd his doom of death:
Lumpish sunk he on the floor,
Nor word after utter'd more.
Leave we here of him to speak,
For the dainty damsel sleek;
And her lover stout and tall,
Danger now misprising all.
Pace beneath the gateway bow'd
Of this lover's castle proud;

* Privity.

There anon the priest has done
Spousal rites, and made them one.
Nothing changing, all their days
Still they kept unminish'd praise;
Still were nam'd, all else above,
Paragons of constant love.

THE LAY OF THE GRAY PALFREY.

THIS is, perhaps, one of the most pleasing fabliaux in M. Le Grand's collection. It is a tale of common life, and may very probably have been founded on a real anecdote; at least it seems likely that, in the conduct of an artificial plot, the author would have displayed his ingenuity in extricating his hero and heroine from their difficulties, by one of those subtle contrivances in which the minstrel tales are so fertile, instead of resorting to the unexpected, though not improbable, accident by which, in the present tale, his purpose is effected. The author of this fabliau, Hugues Le Roi, is not known to us by any other performance; but this little piece tends to give us a favourable impression of his talents. His characters are natural, and well contrasted, so as to excite a good deal of interest in favour of the young lovers; the several incidents are directed to a common end; and the frequent transitions from one part of the subject to another, have the effect of prolonging our suspense without producing tediousness or confusion.

There are some minute circumstances in the conduct of the story, which, though unimportant in themselves, are amusing from their connection with the state of society in the country, and at the time of its composition. The petty feudatories of Champagne intrenched in their fortified country-houses, and so watchfully guarded, that a solitary female cannot gain admission into a castle, till the sentinel has blown his horn, and alarmed the little garrison.—A sincere and ardent lover, at the moment when all his hopes are at issue, running to a tournament, and even after his return, requiring the aid of a minstrel to assist him in his meditations on the object of his passion.—A wedding company marshalled like a little army, and sent out upon its march many hours too soon, because they had no means of ascertaining the time, and were forced to rely on the watchfulness of a drunken porter. —Two artful and avaricious old men, compelled by their own friends to do justice, the one to an injured nephew, the other to an oppressed but disobedient daughter, and this on the ground of submission to the laws, not of their country, but of *love*:—these are small parts in the picture which could only have been traced by the pencil of a contemporary artist; and

which will, perhaps, be thought to derive some value from this circumstance.

It is necessary to add, although the reader could not have failed to make the discovery, that not more than half of the following tale was completed by Mr. Way. His manuscript ends at page 169, line 7. As it would have been very aukward to give the continuation in prose, I have attempted a metrical version of it, which, it is hoped, will be found to possess the only merit to which it has any claim, that of scrupulous fidelity.

THE LAY OF THE GRAY PALFREY.

By Hugues le Roi.

In fair Champagne, in days of yore,
Full ill-endow'd with worldly store,
But bravely thew'd, of virtue bright,
Sir William dwelt, a dreadless knight,
With scarce two hundred livres' land—
His manors were his good right hand;
Staid worth, a courage uncontroll'd,
And honour, pure as native gold.

In tourneys never seen to pace
With loutings quaint, and braggart grace
The damsels and the dames before;
He prick'd amain with forehead lower,
Where hot the press, and stern the deeds,
Of rushing knights, and struggling steeds;
Nor turn'd him backward from the fray,
Till foil'd, on earth, his foeman lay.
And thus (it glads me as I paint
Such praises, though with colours faint,
For rising prowess best is won
To feats of arms, by justice done
To worthies, who have onwards far'd,
Their course of virtue unimpair'd),
Welcome was he at every feast,
Of Cæsars and of kings the guest.
A widow'd lord, of visage hoar,
One good long league, or little more,
Apart from good Sir William's towers,
With one fair daughter pass'd his hours.
Their castles both were in a wood
(Champagne had always forests good)
But the old lord's was on a steep,
And fenc'd beside with ditches deep,

And such a hedge of hawthorn stout
No mortal could get in or out
But when the drawbridge floor'd his way.
So, there his life's declining day
Slipp'd on in undisturb'd retreat,
Beguil'd by Nina's presence sweet,
And cherish'd, once in every year,
With good ten thousand livres clear.
So dainty and so boon a maid,
With such a heritage to aid,
Ye well may judge was furnish'd still
With sighing paramours at will.
But chief in hope beyond the rest
Sir William loyal love profess'd,
With lofty aspiration fir'd
To gain the prize by all desir'd.
So courteous aye in hall was he,
So prime in feats of chivalry;
So bent in every point to please,
He won her heart by slow degrees;
When lo, the sire's suspicious care
Ween'd the good knight too often there,
Enjoin'd his child to shun him straight,
And coldly led him to his gate.

So all these lovers' hopes were marr'd,
For the shrewd fox kept watch and ward:
Too old for riding now become,
Was morning, noon, and night at home;
And having, in youth's lusty hours,
Learn'd all the craft of paramours,
Became so absolute a screen,
His daughter's face might ne'er be seen.
Sir William, daily prowling round
The castle's interdicted ground,
One small neglected postern spied,
A jutting buttress close beside;
And soon, devising means to tell
The damsel he had sped so well,
They both renew'd, in whisper'd breath,
Love's loyal vows that last till death.
Yet, heavy hap, debarr'd the sight
Of all that wakens love's delight,
No look to paint their mutual bliss,
No cordial clasp, no thrilling kiss;
Still trembling, lest suspicion hoar
Should snatch them hence for evermore.
Such state Sir William could not bear,
But onward hies, whatever fare;

Fall weal or utter woe betide,
To ask sweet Nina for his bride.
'Fair sire' (he thus the lord assays,
With manly port and simple phrase),
'Fair sire! I long have lov'd thy child:
'My name, my lineage undefil'd;
'Meseems, such worship doth possess,
'As warrants thought of good success.
'To Nina's hand my hopes aspire;
'And thus I ask her of her sire.
'Enough. Thy answer must decide,
'Or death, or Nina to my bride.'
'Sir knight' (replied the gray-beard lord),
'I marvel nothing, by my word,
'To hear my dainty Nina moves
'Bold gallant knights to deadly loves:
'For young is she, and debonaire,
'And wise withal, though passing fair.
'With birth as high, and free from stain,
'As any maid through all Champagne.
'Then (if her duty meets my hope),
'Of land she'll sure have lordly scope;
'My heiress, as thou mayst perceive,
'And I have mickle wealth to leave;

'A damsel of such promise brave,
'If much I wander not, may have
'A prince of France, of royal blood,
'Nor think her spouse one jot too good.
'Of gentles more than one or two,
'As stout, if well I wot, as you,
'Have put me to this very proof;
'I ever answer—'time enough!'
'I seek not yet a son-in-law:
'I wait some wight sans speck or flaw:
'And such perfections rarely dwell
'With errant knights, who most excell
'In winning prize at tilters' play,
'And, like their falcons, live on prey!'
At so rude answer to his suit
Confusion struck Sir William mute;
Swift to the forest's gloom he flies,
There dwells with bitter tears and sighs
Till darksome night came thickly on;
Then steals the lover wo-begone,
Up to the privy postern gate,
And there he finds his loyal mate;
And there, his heart with sorrows rent,
'Farewell!' he cries, 'my steps are bent

'Far, far away, to other realms;
'Here deadly agony o'erwhelms
'My sinking sprite for loss of thee!
'Here dwells no joy, no hope for me!
'O execrable thirst of gain;
'Love's, loyal love's eternal bane.'
'Alas!' return'd his weeping mate,
'But now I joy'd in my estate;
'For such an offering, well I guess'd,
'Made marriage ties more surely bless'd.
'Now I (my gift to thee controul'd,)
'Most execrate troth-riving gold!
'Yet let us not, sweet love! despair,
'Hear what device my thoughts prepare.
'To Medot straight your palfrey bend,
'Where lives my father's oldest friend:
'One well advis'd of all his ways,
'The playmate of his boyish days;
'Your uncle, you perceive I mean,
'He loves you, William, well I ween;
'To him, our plighted promise pure,
'How we have lov'd, and what endure,
'With undisguised frankness own:
'He'll pity wo himself has known.

'Win him ('tis but a seeming grant,
'For some few days or weeks we want,)
'To pass of lands in simple fee,
'Three hundred livres' worth to thee;
'Then let him to my sire repair,
'And urge thy suit with hopeful prayer.
'Once wedded, thou can'st re-assign,
'Thy kinsman's gift, no longer thine.—
'Ah me! must love like Nina's grow
'By presents won from kinsmen so!'
She spoke—but ere her speech was done,
Is William to his uncle gone:
His tale all told as most behov'd,
Save only, how he was belov'd.
'Well chosen, nephew, by my fay,'
The old man cries—'this many a day
'I've known your mistress, fair and mild,
'So set your heart at rest, my child:
'I'll go, or ere this sun expire,
'Nor fear to win her of her sire.'
And on the spot, in very deed,
Bidding his folk bring forth his steed,
He left Sir William, nigh distraught
With raptures of extatick thought!

Awhile, with fixed arms he stood,
Then leap'd upon his courser good,
And sought Galardon's listed field,
Where two days tournament was held;
And musing, onward as he pac'd,
On all the bliss he soon should taste,
Felt no mistrust, nor once divin'd
What guile and treason lurk'd behind.
The uncle now had climb'd the steep,
The drawbridge past, and gain'd the keep;
Then down the two old playmates sat,
And grac'd their meal with mickle chat;
Call'd up their deeds of prowess done
With knights and damsels dead and gone;
And filling wine, and wine again,
Drank down each other's healths amain.
At last, when every page and groom,
The tables clear'd, had left the room,
The Lord of Medot thus began:
'Old comrade mine, life's meagre span
'Crawls heavily, with little gree,
'To lonely bachelors like me!
'Thy daughter soon will seek a spouse;
'Thou too wilt have an empty house:

'What sayst thou?—might it come to pass
'That I might wed this dainty lass,
'My worldly goods, that self-same hour,
'I'd give her all, to be her dower;
'We'd dwell all three for life together,
'Nor heed long nights, nor wintry weather.'
The sire such spousal offer charms;
He hugs the gray-beard in his arms,
Brings forth sweet Nina to her mate,
And orders wedding garments straight;
For father, child, and all must on,
The morrow following next but one,
To Castle Medot, (so the sire
Yields to the bridegroom his desire,)
With the first peep of morning light,
To solemnize the marriage rite.
To fill the pomp with bride-folk meet,
All round their spurring lackeys greet
Whome'er lean shanks, and wither'd faces,
Had kept thus far from death's embraces,
And bid them—many a tottering guest!
To sweet sad Nina's nuptial feast.
Since weddings first were known, I ween
So quaint a troop no eye had seen;

Such wrinkled elders, bald and bare,
They seem'd, as all assembled there,
To hear one last, 'Heaven speed ye,' said
Ere to their long sad home they sped.
Now, while to deck the future bride,
New coverchiefs and robes are tried;
And she, with counterfeited cheer,
Devours each bitter sigh and tear;
More steeds, 'twas plain, must be purvey'd
To mount so large a cavalcade;
So, forth a menial stripling fared
To borrow all that could be spared.
The lubber, as he went his way,
Bethought him sure that palfrey gray
(For size and temper, mould and mien,
The bravest steed in all Champagne)
On which Sir William wont to ride,
Must needs be welcome to the bride!
Forthwith, aside he turns his beast
To gain this palfrey for the feast.
Leave we awhile the father old,
How fared the knight must now be told.
Sir William, in the tourney's fray
Had borne the choicest prize away,

And homeward bent, with hope exalted,
Though bootless on his road he halted
Before his uncle's gate awhile;
Yet were his thoughts so free from guile,
He weens, be sure, his hopes to bliss
With the first tidings of success,
His uncle to his hall will come—
So, joyful hies he to his home;
And there, to cheat a weary hour,
He bids a minstrel to his bower,
And hears sweet songs of blissful love,
And hopes, ere long, that bliss to prove.
His uncle now, be sure, is near;
And hark! a bugle strikes his ear.
Behold him—no!—a menial slave
From Nina's sire some boon to crave.
And thus the loon his suit commends,
'Fair sir! my lord kind greeting sends,
'And fain would borrow, if he may,
'For twice twelve hours, your palfrey gray.'
'Most willingly! and braver steed
'Ne'er bore a knight to valorous deed;
'But who the courser shall bestride?'—
'Sweet Nina, sir, your uncle's bride.

'To-morrow, ere the dawn of day,
'To Medot's towers she takes her way.'—
'Nina?'—'Yes sure; her sire's command
'To your good uncle gives her hand.'
Quite wo-begone, with frantick air,
Hush'd in the silence of despair,
The cruel tale Sir William hears;
And doubts its truth, and blames his fears;
And bids repeat each word again,
And writhes with renovated pain.
Then, staring wild,—'Hence! hence away,
'Quick from my sight the steed convey!
'Let him the perjur'd Nina bear,
'And crown her joys with my despair;
'To Medot bear th' exulting bride
'Array'd in all her nuptial pride!
'Yet sure, in spite of her disdain,
'When she shall seize that palfrey's rein,
'Awhile on me her heart shall rue!—
'Ah Nina!—thou!—so wonder true!
'Thou too dost weep; thou, lost like me,
'Victim of foulest treachery;
'Thou lov'st me still: thy ruthless sire
'Would vainly force thy free desire;

'And, till my being I resign,
'This constant heart shall aye be thine!'
Deject, and hopeless, to the hall
Now bids the knight his lieges all,
And thanks them for their service true,
And gives them, with his last adieu,
Such meed as his poor means afford,
And wills them seek some wealthier lord.
'With noblest largess, if I might,
'Your duty would I fain requite,
'Good friends,' he cries; 'and ere ye part
'(Sole offering of a broken heart),
'Take my best thanks. Now speed ye hence:
'My lot be death or indigence!'
He said, and to his chamber hied.—
The pitying crowd have vainly tried
To sooth their master's troubled sprite;
So, sadly through the live-long night,
Resolv'd his honour'd life to guard,
All, near his bower, keep watch and ward,
And raise to heaven a silent prayer
To shield his soul from fell despair.
Meanwhile, throughout the spacious keep,
The baron's guests were fast asleep.

Prepar'd, ye wot, at early day,
To ride three leagues of rugged way,
Warn'd that, ere dawn, the porter's bell
Shall rouse each sleeper from his cell;
Well prim'd with wine, the sapient crew
At early hour to rest withdrew.
Only sweet Nina sleepless lies;
Vain schemes in quick succession rise,
Vain hopes of visionary aid:——
Alas, the flattering visions fade,
No hope of aid or flight appears,
Her sole resource, unceasing tears.
Scarce midnight past, the moon gan rise,
And struck the porter's wondering eyes
Where he (some evening bumpers quaff'd)
Sat dreaming of the morrow's draught;
So, waken'd by the moon-light blaze,
He ween'd it sure the morning's rays;
Sprang to his bell with hasty zeal,
And rang amain a deafening peal.
All quickly rise alert and prest,
E'en Nina's self at length is dress'd.
Stunn'd by her woes she nothing heeds
The gallant guests, the prancing steeds,

Till the gray palfrey meets her eyes:
Then gush her tears, then burst her sighs:
She may not mount;—with eager prayer
She begs this last worst pang to spare;
Her prayers, her struggles, all are vain;
On must she fare.—The menial train
The march begin: next pace along
The wedding-guests, a gray-beard throng;
Then, in the rear, the weeping maid;
And last, to close the cavalcade,
An ancient knight, of valour tried,
The future sponsor of the bride.

Three leagues of road, ye heard me say,
The band must pass; through woods it lay:
So streight, so cross'd with briar and bough,
Two steeds abreast 'twould scant allow.
Perforce the troop must march in file.
With songs and jests one tedious mile,
Joyous and brisk the veterans ride;
At length the songs and jests subside;
The still cold air, the glimmering moon,
Tell them they left their beds too soon:
From eye to eye the influence creeps,
Each nods awhile, then soundly sleeps.

Gentles! so courteous and so sage,
Ye know the reverence due to age;
Ye honour eld; and yet, pardie,
I gage ye would have laugh'd to see
These slumbering gray-beards in a row,
Their bald sculls nodding to and fro,
Now dropping on their coursers' mane,
Now starting bolt-upright again.
The bride, with love and grief distraught,
Wastes not on them a moment's thought;
But, as the wretch to death who wends,
Deems that his march too quickly ends,
Poor Nina blames her courser's speed;
Checks, and still checks her eager steed,
Till the grave troop to sleep resign'd,
Leave their sweet charge full far behind.
Still at her heels the sponsor hies,
And opes, at times, his languid eyes,
But close the palfrey gray appears;
Again he nods, nor danger fears:
Indeed, so narrow was the way
He weens they cannot go astray.
At length the road in two divides:
Eager to reach his distant guides,

Straight on the sponsor's courser fares,
Straight on his weetless rider bears.
Not so Sir William's palfrey gray:
Left his own judgment to obey,
He by the left-hand path proceeds,
Which to Sir William's stable leads.
But ere they reach the knight's abode,
A crossing torrent bars the road.
In plung'd the steed. The dashing sound
Wakes Nina from her trance profound.
She turns, she screams; no succour near!
Sole, helpless, in the forest drear,
Bewilder'd by the dubious light,
She paus'd: then urg'd her desperate flight.
Oh may she scape that odious chain!
But, if that rising hope be vain,
Far better here to die she deems,
Engulf'd within these whelming streams!
The streams, howbe, nor deep nor wide,
Well knew the steed, who oft had tried.
Quick bounds he forth with crest elate,
Nor stops, but at Sir William's gate.
The porter sounds his bugle clear,
To speak some noble stranger near;

Then through the wicket eyes the dame,
And cautious asks her rank and name.
'Quick! open quick! from felon hands
'Scarce scap'd, a maid your help demands!'
The porter scans with studious eye
That form! that robe of scarlet dye!
That steed! so like the palfrey gray,—
'Tis, sure, some charitable fay
That makes young errant knights her care,
And comes to cure his lord's despair!
Alas! her utmost help he needs!
So, with his news the porter speeds.
The knight, to speechless grief a prey,
Had wak'd and wept the hours away,
And pac'd his gloomy chamber o'er,
While mute and listening near the door,
His faithful lieges inly moan,
And make their patron's griefs their own.
Yet were the courteous knight to blame
Should he neglect the stranger dame;
So, straight he bids the drawbridge fall,
His menials marshal'd in the hall,
Himself, as fits, with honour meet,
Goes forth the beauteous guest to greet;

And lowly bows, and sadly rears
His feverish eyes, still sprent with tears,
And sees—his Nina's angel face,
And feels his Nina's warm embrace.
Close and more close her timid breast,
Against his sheltering bosom press'd.
Yet still, with wild reverted eyes,
'Shield me! oh shield me, love!' she cries,
'Close the pursuing fiends appear:
'See them!'—'Nay, sweet! now cease to fear;
(The knight replied) to guard my love,
'Think not these arms shall nerveless prove:
'No! let our foes their powers combine!
'Thou art, and ever shall be mine!'
Now calls he forth his faithful band.—
The drawbridge rais'd, the turrets mann'd;
No fear, though numerous foes assail,
Their utmost power shall soon prevail;
One task remains, the best and last:
So to the chapel are they pass'd,
And there, with heaven's mysterious rites,
The chaplain sage their hands unites.
Their anguish past, their long annoy,
More keenly points the present joy:

The menials press on every side
Round the good knight, and lovely bride;
And bless, with shouts that rend the air,
Sir William bold, and Nina fair!
Not thus, pardie, in Medot's hall:
There, the quaint guests assembled, all
Appear'd in nuptial weeds array'd,
All, save the sponsor and the maid;
But, of the sleeping troop, not one
Could dream which way this pair was gone.
At length the sponsor knight they see;
Still nodding on his steed was he,
And much surpris'd, in open day,
No more to view the palfrey gray.
Perchance, where tangled paths have cross'd,
The maid is in the forest lost?
Not so: they search the forest round,
Nina was no where to be found.
At length they learn, in happy hour,
She dwells in good Sir William's bower;
(Thus by his squire Sir William sends,)
The knight his love to all commends,
And greets each dame and reverend lord,
And bids them to his humble board.

So went they all. With decent air
The knight to each presents the fair;
The fair belov'd from early life,
And now his dear and wedded wife.
Scarce can he breathe the fatal sound
Ere angry murmurs rise around,
But when the knight his tale has told,
Of Nina to his uncle sold;
Of two fond hearts of fraud the prey,
Till rescu'd by the palfrey gray,
These elders train'd in honour's cause,
Grown gray beneath love's powerful laws,
All in Sir William's cause conspire,
All press to gain th' indignant sire;
And, should the uncle urge his claim,
Condemn the deed to deathless shame.
So both, from mutual bonds releas'd,
Unite to bliss the nuptial feast.
Within the year the uncle died,
And soon the father of the bride;
So rules the knight their joint domain,
The wealthiest lord in all Champagne.

THE PARADISE OF LOVE.

MR. WARTON has observed, in his History of English Poetry, that the *pageants*, which it was customary to exhibit on festivals and great occasions, in every country in Europe, are likely to have so far familiarized the eyes and the imaginations of the minstrels with allegory and personification, as to produce that excessive fondness for a variety and profusion of ornament which is observable in their descriptive poetry. They became much addicted to dreaming, and their waking meditations were scarcely less visionary.

This appears in the following piece, where the poet having occasion to describe one of his morning walks, very unexpectedly bestows on an European meadow the spicy odours of the East, and then presents us with an enchanted fountain and supernatural tree, without recollecting that these marvels would have been much more properly reserved for his subsequent dream, because the reader cannot so abruptly enter into the feelings of a man who professes to be neither

sleeping nor waking. M. Le Grand has expressed his dissatisfaction at this conduct, and has observed, justly enough, that as it is easy to fall asleep under an oak or an elm, the poet is unnecessarily prodigal of his miracles. Perhaps he had originally intended to elicit from this tree some allegory which he afterwards forgot; or perhaps he thought an enchantment so good a thing as to be worth inserting for its own sake; and, being very sure that his readers were fond of the smell of cinnamon, thought there could be no harm in employing it to perfume a field which he meant to describe as very delightful.

It is remarkable, that a similar tree and fountain are found in the Romance of YVAIN and GAWAIN, of which Mr. Warton has given us an extract in Vol. III. sect. 25: a storm is excited by the same means, and the tree is covered with all the birds of the air. The lines are as follows:

Follow forth this ilk *street*,
And soon some marvels shall you meet.
The well is under the fairest tree
That ever was in this contree;
By that well *hinges* (hangs) a basin
That is of gold good and fine;

With a chain, truly to tell,
That will reach into the well:—
By the well stands a stone;
Take the bason soon anon,
And cast on water with thy hand,
And soon you shall see new *tithand* (tidings):
A storm shall rise, and a tempest,
All about, by east and west:
You shall hear many thunder blast,
All about thee blowand fast,
And there shall come sik sleet and rain,
That *unnese* (scarcely) shall you stand again, &c. &c.

The knight pursued these directions. He says—

I took the bason soon anon,
And helt water upon the stone,
The weather wex then wonder black,
And the thunder fast gan crack;
There came sik storms of hail and rain,
Unnethes (scarcely) I might stand there again:
The *store* (stour, strong) winds blew full loud,
So keen came never air of cloud.
I was driven with snow and sleet,
Unnethes I might stand on my feet;
In my face the *levening* (lightning) smate, &c.

Then saw I soon a merry sight
Of all the fowls that are in flight,
Lighted so thick upon that tree
That bough ne leaf none might I see.
So merrily gon they sing, &c. &c.

Notwithstanding these little defects, (which are in a great measure concealed in the English translation,) and though the author has dwelt rather too long on some of his digressions, the *Paradise of Love* is a very pleasing and fanciful specimen of descriptive poetry. We are indebted to M. Le Grand for lopping away the excessive luxuriance of allegory which would have rendered the concluding oration of Cupid insufferably tedious to a modern ear; and Mr. Way has, with great ingenuity, united the scattered hints of the French translator, and formed them into the three elegant stanzas, which give a very natural and pleasing termination to the poem.

THE PARADISE OF LOVE;

OR,

THE COMPLAINT OF LOVE.

Let never wight, who finds his misty skull
Send forth the stream of pleasing verse with pain,
Thwart Nature's course, but rest obscurely dull,
And wait some happier sunshine of his brain.
I now warn others, who can scarce restrain
Mine own intemperance and itch of rhyme
From bursting on the world before its time.

Why now dost write? methinks ye seem to cry:
Sirs! I have found a tale has pleas'd me well;
And, that my friends partake, full fain would I:
So may I but succeed the same to tell!
Unskill'd am I in makers' magick spell;
Yet, for the substance of my tale is good,
I still hope pardon, though its garb be rude.

I.

In the sweet month of joy-renewing May,
When earth with green, and trees with bloom are dress'd;

When recreated Nature's lengthening day
Bids fowl to seek their mates as likes them best,
And build with merry madrigals their nest,
Then Love, subduing hearts that proudest be,
Cast in his might to make a thrall of me.

II.

His gentle fury I had laugh'd to scorn,
(Ah silly groom!) whose power I ne'er had known;
And many a sorrow sharp by others borne
Had ween'd as brain-deluding follies, shown
By witless youth who cherish food for moan:
'Your hour will come anon!' they still replied,
'Your hour for teen and trouble, ill-defied!'

III.

Too well the suppliants sped! their vows were heard;
The slighted power my punishment decreed;
A dame, the loveliest sure on earth, appear'd,
And straight, me seem'd, a dart so keen did speed
Forth from her eyes, my inmost heart did bleed.
As when on earth descends the lightning's flame
Like fire, the thrilling eye-glance inward came.

IV.

Up to my cheeks the crimson torrent rose,
Then wax I sickly sad, and wan of hue;
Now hot as charcoal when the workman blows,
Now, icy chillness through my body flew,
As it were freezing bone and marrow through.
Frail man! in wailful watch my nights were past,
Me seem'd that every hour would be my last.

V.

And aye, with bitter blot of senseless blame,
'Gainst her, the empress of my life, I cry:
Ne never dare bewray my hopeless flame,
Though plaining still of ruthless *surquedry*,*
I charge her walls and gates with cruelty,
And whosoe'er such lets might first invent
For me alone, and for my punishment.

VI.

'What? dost thou ween' (a secret voice would say,
When as my love I purpos'd to forego),

* Arrogance.

'Those wondrous charms thou doat'st on day by day,
'Thy queen, in thriftless lavishment, shall throw
'Down at thy feet ere thou declare thy wo?
'Nay, rather speak thy pains, unfold thy grief;
'Thy gentle dame may chance vouchsafe relief.'

VII.

Straight, seeming strong from such advisement grown,
I seek the presence of my heart's delight,
And think to make my world of sorrows known,
When, lo! one look puts all my thoughts to flight.
Trembling my knees, my life-blood icy quite,
I find myself gone thence, abash'd and mute,
No word assay'd that might advance my suit.

VIII.

So, sad I far'd, my strength declining fast,
My griefs no moment of the day forgot:
All-conquering Love vouchsafed me grace at last.—
The live-long night, as was my wonted lot,
In tears had pass'd, nor yet day's orb was hot,
When forth I walk'd my sorrows to beguile,
Where freshly smelling fields with dew-drops smile.

IX.

Already, with his shrilling carol gay,
The vaulting sky-lark hail'd the sun from far;
And with so sweet a musick seem'd to play
My heart-strings round, as some propitious star
Had chaced whate'er might fullest joyance mar:
Bath'd in delicious dews of calm delight,
My voice thus strove to speak my solaced spright.

X.

Hark! O hark!
Merry lark!
Reckless all how I do pine:
Let but love my vows befriend,
To my warm embraces send,
The flaxen fair
That wakes my care;
And my joys shall match with thine.

XI.

Scarce had I closed my song, when, unawares,
I found me placed in a delightful mead,
Where precious cinnamon flung balmy airs,

And thousand flowers, blue, yellow, white, and red,
The dark-green tapestry in profusion spread;
The violet, the lily of the vale,
The purple radiance inter-laced with pale.

XII.

Up from the bosom of the teeming soil,
Than emerald more bright, or ruby sheen,
A gurgling fountain burst with pretty coil,
And over sands of purest gold I ween
Flow'd gently down its 'broider'd banks atween.
The damask rose, the flower-de-luce was there,
Fringing with numbers more this channel rare.

XIII.

A shapely tree, extending overhead,
Close intertwined its canopy of boughs:
All in a circle quaintly was it spred,
Thereon Dan Phœbus ever dimly throws
His scorching beam, for never sunshine knows
The clear cool fount; nor fails of freshness aught,
Begirt with steps of marble subtly wrought.

XIV.

To these was bounden, by a silver chain,
A precious goblet of enamell'd gold:
Scarce might I then my raging thirst restrain,
But for strange warning, which my sprite controul'd,
In silver letters meynt with azure told:—
'Base, villainous, and lewd, whoe'er thou be,
'Base villain hand, be heedful touch not me!'

XV.

Reckless of future hap, the cup I raught,
And plung'd it in the hollow-sounding wave,
(Danger unseen fools ever hold for nought)
Therewith, the reeling ground dread signal gave:
Pours rain, and lightnings blaze, and thunders rave,
As earth and heaven in desolating fray,
Torn from their fix'd abodes should pass away.

XVI.

Fear seized me; on the grass my limbs I threw,
Beneath the covert of the mantling tree:
Thick, here and there, the bolts of thunder flew,
And seem'd as each should make an end of me:
I wot not how this prodigy might be,

Yet aye, it seem'd, my bow'r with magick charm
Fenced off the storm, and I was safe from harm.

XVII.

Now sunk the howling blast, and fled the gloom
From the blue surface of the smiling sky:
While wondrously, from Earth's unfathom'd womb,
Where rear'd the tree its shapely trunk on high,
Seem'd to arise delicious melody:
And from its branches, with accordance meet,
A thousand birds pour'd forth their carol sweet.

XVIII.

With lulling pleasure overpower'd, I slept,
Nor waked till, borne by hand unseen away,
I found me in a bath, where roses wept
Such fragrant waters o'er me as I lay,
As purified all filth of fleshly clay;
And forth I came, than falling snows more fair,
Astonish'd at my own perfections rare.

XIX.

Eftsoons in glittering garments was I deck'd,
And, lined throughout with whitest ermeline;
O'er them was cast a crimson mantle, fleck'd

On its wide border, wrought by fingers fine,
With buds that lurk'd beneath the golden twine:
Then, on a flowery path impell'd I move,
Toward the proud palace of the God of Love.

XX.

Howbe, before me a dry champaign lay,
With stones unsightly here and there bestrew'd:
In midst, a mansion crumbling to decay,
With its bye-path nigh choked with brambles rude:
There were imprison'd caitiffs, foes to good,
Who ever pried at folk that past along
With pointing finger, and false lolling tongue.

XXI.

Slanderers they all were hight: ill fare the race!
And such a multitude, I fear me sore
No end may come to their detractions base,
Till the dread hour when time shall be no more.
I turn'd me from the path I trod before,
And straight, beyond a broad deep moat, I spied
A troop more foul than those I left beside.

XXII.

Disloyal lovers these, full sure I read,
In blandishments unsound their time they spent;
And while they kiss'd, as wights who loved indeed,
Their wandering eyes were evermore intent
On side-long glances for some other meant.
Spied they a maid whose artless charms invite,
Eftsoons they're cast to win her how they might.

XXIII.

And baits they spread that make one's heart to rue,
To work their shameful will, and to beguile
Poor artless innocence, and honour true,
To the fell snare of their affections vile:
Feigning love's sharpest torments all the while,
If haply, so some ruth they may infuse,
All otherwise than loyal lovers use.

XXIV.

And shall we marvel then, if guileless maid,
Mild, and compassionate, and form'd to yield,
Turns to the tempter's lures, and is betray'd,
Simplicity of heart her only shield?
For traitors, though their cruel hearts be steel'd,

Yet can they weep, and groan, and sorely sigh,
Bending their knee with feign'd humility.

XXV.

Ay me! her sprite doth quail to see his wo!
With his perfidious tears are mix'd her own!
The fort of honour falls before the foe;
Ah blame not her! by lack of guile alone,
By too confiding loyalty o'erthrown!
Blame him, the hypocrite! him worthy blame,
Who under-foot doth tread her honest name.

XXVI.

Afore-time long, his subtly-warming snares,
To work this damsel's bale, he had devised;
And cast how he might catch her unawares;
Lo, now he shuns her! by herself despised,
Prest for new spoil on chastity surprised.
Oh! may that felon race, true lovers' bane,
In most abhorrence aye of all remain!

XXVII.

Onward I journey, and at length, behold,
Where a long avenue of fragrant trees
Lead to a palace over-laid with gold,

(Such potent duke or monarch well might please,)
And on its moats that shone like glassy seas,
With well-wrought masonry of marble lined,
Floated amphibious fowl of every kind.

XXVIII.

There swam they, all in pairs, the stately swan,
With many more than here rehearse I may,
Now gently sailing side by side, anon
Dashing, in love's disport, the glittering spray:
Beneath, the finny race in couples lay:
Birds, fishes, beasts, all wedded; save alone
One turtle on a wither'd branch made moan.

XXIX.

The portal of the palace right before,
Two stately columns rose, of crystal wrought,
A snow-white marble image either bore,
With hidden powers of Cupid's magick fraught:
For now one seem'd to kiss, then th' other sought,
With interchange of sweet caress and smile,
To pay that back she had received erewhile.

XXX.

Much was I wondering at so strange a sight,
When back the double gates recoiling flew;
And the full glories of Love's mansion bright
Burst forth at once on my astonish'd view.
'Lo Paradise!' I cried with rapture new,
No! were I hundred-tongued, those tongues would fail
To give full form and utterance to the tale.

XXXI.

All, most by mortals sought, unchanging joy,
Unrival'd Beauty, ever harbour'd there:
Soft lays of love, perfumes that never cloy,
With hum of ceaseless kisses, fill'd the air:
Enthron'd in flowers, the monarch debonnaire
Look'd round on all, and whom he look'd on, blest;
And the whole year was one continual feast.

XXXII.

As when, in centre of the firmament,
The peerless sun stands forth with dazzling sheen,
That mortal folk are with the light yblent;
Such was the godhead's sovereign beauty seen,
Encompass'd with his court: of these I ween

Were many a pair of lovers scatter'd round,
That from his fostering look protection found.

XXXIII.

With his fair mate was many a lover there,
In speechless dalliance lost and mute delight;
And ever as the monarch eyed a pair,
It seem'd his look spoke pleasure at the sight:
Then would he shoot such thrilling arrows bright
Through their faint frame, the subtle fire would rove,
And waken new necessity to love.

XXXIV.

All here was bliss. But I, alas the while!
Far from the ken of her my heart loved best,
Reap'd nor caresses sweet, nor soothing smile,
And envious grew for others joy possest;
Till, as obedient to Love's high behest,
My long, long tale of martyrdom I told,
Mingled with tears and singults manifold.

XXXV.

Thus with prophetic speech my sprite he cheer'd:
'Take courage, liegeman mine; thy hours anon
'Shall be in pleasure bathed: was never rear'd

'So stable edifice for lover's wonne
'As on the base of troubles past and gone.
'Then not a groan, or sigh, or tear is lost,
'Joy grows more precious from the pains it cost.

XXXVI.

'I sped the lark; I raised the pelting storm,
'The slumber, scatter'd o'er thy lids, was mine;
'All, mystic meanings veil: whose wondrous form
'Now gather, shadow'd out by lips divine:
'The shrill lark tells how, at his lady's shrine,
'Each loyal wight, with aspiration strong,
'Should chant, when day first breaks, his matin song.

XXXVII.

'The rain, the vollied thunder fraught with flame,
'Show well the tears, the pangs, by lovers known;
'The bath speaks honour pure from blot of blame;
'The turtle, moaning on her branch alone,
'Firm constancy; when, all his hopes o'erthrown,
'The wretch beholds the idol of his trust
'Snatch'd from his sight to mingle with the dust.'

XXXVIII.

All this, and mickle mo, with ravish'd ear
I gather'd as I might, and well retain:
'Besure,' he cried, 'thy heart be spotless, clear;
'No love where villainy man's heart doth stain.'
Trust me, I ever heed the godhead's strain;
And honestly fulfil, this long time past,
Looking for royal recompence at last.

THE reader is now in possession of all that Mr. Way had designed for publication in these volumes; but as a few small pieces of poetry, which I hope I am not too partial in considering as eminently beautiful, and which were originally intended for a work very nearly analogous to the present, were found among his papers, I have taken this opportunity of laying them before the publick.

They are translations of some small lays and songs contained in the first volume of the '*Corps d'Extraits de Romans de Chevalerie, par M. Le Comte de Tressan.*'—It is, perhaps, unnecessary to inform those who are at all acquainted with French literature, that this elegant writer has performed, for the authors of the old romances, the same good office which M. Le Grand has executed in favour of the *Fabliours*: but that instead of barely analysing the contents of their ponderous volumes, he has carefully selected, from his originals, all those natural and simple passages which are occasionally found even in the productions of the most barbarous ages, and has preserved the few poeti-

cal pieces interspersed in them, with some few corrections indeed, but without adding any embellishments inconsistent with their antique and Gothic character. By thus happily contrasting the elegance and perspicuity of modern language with the quaint simplicity of the *Norman Romance*, he has been enabled to give such variety to his style, that the attention of the reader is kept awake through a series of events often disgusting by their improbability, tiresome by their sameness and by their number, and so unconnected as to bid defiance to all the resources of method and arrangement. Mr. Way was of opinion that the same variety of style might be preserved in an English translation; that the plan might be still farther improved by giving a metrical version of the shortest and least complicated of these ancient tales; and that an abridgment of romances of chivalry, thus executed, would form a pleasing continuation to his specimens of ancient fabliaux. He had begun his attempt by the romance of '*Tristan de Léonois*;' and I should have been glad to avail myself of his fragment, had it been sufficient to serve as an introduction to the poetry it was intended to contain: but it comprises only some preliminary events of little importance to the story.

For the information of those readers who are not

acquainted either with the works of M. de Tressan, or with our English black-letter folio, called *Mort Arthur*, it may be necessary to state, that Tristan, son of Meliadus, King of *Léonois* (the *Lyonnese*, a part of Cornwall which is no longer visible above water), was one of the most renowned knights of the round table. He was called *Tristan* (in old English Sir Tristram) because 'tristfully he came into the world;' having by his birth occasioned the death of his mother. The only circumstance of his life with which we are at present interested, is his constant and successful passion for the beautiful Yseult (whom Gower and our old romancers call Bell Isoud), daughter of the King of Ireland, whom, in consequence of an unfortunate promise, he was compelled to demand in marriage for his uncle Marc, King of Cornwall. A *love-potion*, which the mother had intrusted to a confidant, for the purpose of being divided between the young princess and her husband, having been inadvertently shared by Yseult and Tristan, during their passage to England, proved fatal to the domestick comforts of poor King Marc; who, on his part, very frequently deranged the projects of his wife and nephew, and perhaps contributed by his active persecution to keep alive the influence of the *love-potion*. Tristram, however, was too

ardent to be proof against jealousy. Having found a letter from his mistress addressed to a rival whom his fears represented as no less fortunate than himself, he suddenly became a prey to despair, rushed into the woods, refused all sustenance, and, according to the accustomed practice of jealous knights, fell into a deep reverie. A damsel, who accidentally met and recognized him, having ventured to interrupt *his thought*, was at first rebuked by him for such a breach of civility; but being aware of the nature of his complaint, she only left him to fetch her harp, the first notes of which effectually roused him from his lethargy. He then asked her if she had ever heard *the Death-song* (le Lai de Mort), and tuning the instrument, sung the following stanzas:

Je fis jadis chansons et lays,
Amour rendoit mes chants parfaits,
Mais à present mon art ne mets
Qu'à faire ouïr tous mes regrets.

Amour, charmante fantaisie,
Toi que j'ai constamment suivie,
Toi qui donnes à tous la vie,
Ah! c'est toi qui me l'as ravie!

D'amour ainsi m'est advenu,
Comme à celui qui a tenu
En son sein le serpent tout nu,
Et puis en est à mort venu.

En ma dernière heure te prie,
Yseult, ô ma douce ennemie,
Toi qui jadis me fus amie,
Après ma mort, las! ne m'oublie.

Lorsqu'en terre serai gissant,
Sur ma tombe on ira lisant:
‘ Oncques personne n'aima tant
‘ Comme Tristan; si meurt pourtant

Fleur de noble chevalerie,
Lancelot, dont la courtoisie
A tant de valeur est unie,
Satisfais ma dernière envie.

Je te lègue lance et harnois;
Mais en combats comme en tournois,
Noble ami, dans tous tes exploits,
D'Yseult fais respecter les lois.

Toi, dieu puissant que je reclame,
Sauve moi de toute autre flamme
Que celle dont j'ards pour ma dame ;
Donne sauvement à mon âme.

TRANSLATION.

Sweet I sang in former days,
Kind love perfected my lays ;
Now my art alone displays
The woe that on my being preys.

Charming love, delicious power,
Worshipp'd from my earliest hour;
Thou who life on all dost shower,
Love ! my life thou dost devour.

Thus by love to me doth fall,
As to him who cherish shall,
In his breast an aspick small,
Speeding on his funeral !

In death's hour I beg of thee,
Yseult, dearest enemy;
Thou, who erst could'st kinder be,
When I'm gone, forget not me.

On my gravestone passers by
Oft will read, as low I lie,
'Never wight in love could vie
'With Tristan; yet she let him die.'

Flower of noble chivalry,
Lancelot, whose courtesy
Prowess meets, and honour high,
Grant my last wish ere I die.

Take my lance and armour bright;
But in tourney or in fight,
Noble friend, let never knight
My sovrain Yseult's mandate slight.

And thou, god of mightiest name,
Guard me from all other flame
Than what now consumes my frame;
And save my soul from blot of blame.

In the meantime Yseult, who was far from meriting his suspicions, passed her life in lamenting his absence. One day, her jealous husband, having entered her chamber unperceived, over-heard her singing the following lay:

Ma voix n'a plus qu' accens piteux,
Ma harpe que sons langoureux;
Dieu d'amour, les chants gracieux,
Sont faits pour les amants heureux.

Près de toi que j'étois joyeuse!
Soupirant ma flamme amoureuse,
Ma voix étoit mélodieuse,
Ma harpe plus harmonieuse.

Ah! loin de moi, mon cher Tristan,
Es-tu tranquille, es-tu content?
Pourrois-tu l'être un seul instant,
Loin de celle qui t'aime tant?

Gazons fleuris, chambrette obscure,
Temoins de tant douce aventure,
Quand de Tristan seul j'avois cure,
Soyez le des maux que j'endure.

TRANSLATION.

My voice to piteous wail is bent,
My harp to notes of languishment,
Ah love! delightsome lays be meant
For happier wights, with hearts content.

When near to thee, how blest was I!
Then, breathing love in every sigh,
My voice right jocund notes would try,
My harp gave sweetest harmony.

Ah Tristan! far away from me,
Art thou from restless anguish free?
Ah! couldst thou so one moment be,
From her who so much loveth thee?

Ye flowery turfs, ye bowers obscure,
Who witness'd oft our joys so pure,
When Tristan every ill could cure,
Witness the ills I now endure.

Tristan, after a due degree of despair and a proper number of adventures, is restored to his senses, and becomes as blessed as ever in the fondness of Yseult; but King Marc, whom no habit is able to reconcile to his lot, continues to interrupt the happiness of the lovers. During one of their longest separations, Yseult being in a thick forest with Brangien, her confidante, sings this complaint:

Feuillage épais, verts gazons, doux silence,
Bien invitez à prendre le repos;

Mais tant revient si douce remembrance,
Que de mes cris j'éveille les échos.

Dans ces scepeuils plantés par la nature,
Fontaine sourd, et nourrit mille fleurs:
Las! mes soupirs augmentent son murmure,
Ses petits flots sont grossis par mes pleurs.

Que fait Tristan? ah, plus d'une victoire
Du los d'honneur lui décerne le prix!
La table ronde élève aux cieux sa gloire:
Chétive hélas! il n'entend pas mes cris.

Ma Brangien, ma tant fidelle amie,
Rapelles toi Tristan, son doux maintien,
Quand il disoit, 'Fors la parque ennemie,
'Ma chère Yseult, ne rompra mon lien.

'Bien asservi dans tant doux vasselage,
'Vas, ton Tristan ne desire que toi,
'Si los je quiers, c'est pour t'en faire hommage,
'Si vivre veux, c'est pour garder ma foi.

'*Boire amoureux*, c'est trompeuse magie;
'Desirs brulans, c'est flamme de tes yeux;

'Nos vœux secrets, c'est douce sympathie;
'Nos doux liens, c'est bien l'œuvre des dieux.'

TRANSLATION.

Sweet silence, shadowy bower, and verdant laire,
Ye court my troubled sprite to take repose;
Whilst I, such dear remembrance rises there,
I, waken every echo with my woes.

Within these woods, by nature's hand array'd,
A fountain springs, and feeds a thousand flowers;
Ah! how my groans do all its murmurs aid!
How my sad eyes do swell it with their showers!

What doth my knight the while?—to him is given
A double meed; in love, and arms' emprize:
Him the round table elevates to heaven!
Tristan!—ah me! he hears not Yseult's cries.

Brangien, my friend, the truest friend alive;
Recall my Tristan's look, his voice benign,
Then when he told me,—'Fate alone shall rive,
'Yseult, my dear, the chain that binds me thine.

'In such mild vassalage right well appay'd,
'Thy Tristan seeks for nought but thee alone:
'I wish for fame—but at thy feet 'tis laid;
'For life, but 'tis to make my fealty known.

'*The amorous draught*, 'tis magical deceit;
'Inflam'd desire, 'tis brightness from thy eyne:
'Our secret vows, they're sympathies most sweet;
'Our bonds of love, a workmanship divine.'

The last piece of poetry introduced in this romance forms an excellent contrast to the preceding. It is sung by Tristan, at a moment when, enjoying a temporary respite from the ceaseless persecutions of King Marc, he is conducting the beautiful Yseult to a secure asylum, the castle of 'La Joyeuse Garde,' the seat of his friend Sir Lancelot.

This species of poem is called a *triolet*, and its structure is rather complicated; the first couplet being repeated at the end, and the first line in the middle of each stanza. Like the *rondeau* and the *virelai* (the latter of which required the return of the first entire stanza at stated intervals), it is very ancient: indeed the foolish vanity of poets in all ages,

has led them to multiply the difficulties of their art. I do not recollect to have seen a triolet in English, though it was always a favourite with the French poets; to one of whom (Jean Mechinot, who died in 1509), is attributed the additional honour of having invented anagrams, acrostics, &c. &c.

Avec Yseult et les amours,
Ah que je fais un doux voyage!
Heureux qui peut vivre toujours
Avec Yseult et les amours!
Elle est maitresse de mes jours.
Près d'elle ils sont tous sans nuage.
Avec Yseult et les amours,
Ah! que je fais un doux voyage!

A' chaque instant que je te vois,
Dans mon cœur nait trouble agréable;
Mon cœur me dit, et je l'en crois,
(A' chaque instant que je te vois,)
Que c'est pour la première fois,
Que tu vas m'être favorable!
A' chaque instant que je te vois,
Dans mon cœur nait trouble agréable.

L'aube du jour t'a vu partir ;
Yseult, n'es-tu pas fatiguée ?
Ce gazon invite au plaisir.
L'aube du jour t'a vu partir ;
Ah ! ne fut ce que pour dormir,
Descends, entrons sous la ramée.
L'aube du jour t'a vu partir ;
Yseult, n'es-tu pas fatiguée ?

TRANSLATION.

With fair Yseult, and with love,
Ah ! how sweet the life I lead !
How blest for ever thus to rove
With fair Yseult and with love !
As she wills, I live and move,
And cloudless days to days succeed.
With fair Yseult and with love,
Ah ! how sweet the life I lead !

Still, as my eyes new charms perceive,
Soft tumults in my heart arise ;
My heart tells, and I believe,
(Still as my eyes new charms perceive,)
'Tis now that hour she did receive,
With kind ear first, her lover's sighs.

Still as my eye new charms perceive,
Soft tumults in my heart arise.

Journeying on from break of day,
Feel you not fatigued, my fair?
Yon green turf invites to play:
Journeying on from break of day,
Ah let us to that shade away,
Were it but to slumber there!
Journeying on from break of day,
Feel you not fatigued, my fair?

The next song is introduced in the romance of Flores and Blanche-Fleur. Flores is a Mahometan prince, and Blanche-Fleur a Christian princess, who had been educated as a slave at the court of the king his father. Being forced to separate himself from her, he receives, at parting, a magical ring, intended to inform him, by its brilliant or clouded appearance, of her good or ill fortune. During his absence, his only amusement is to cultivate a small garden, in which a number of white flowers are so disposed as to form the cyphers of his mistress, intermixed with his own. This garden is the scene of the following song, in which I have taken the liberty

of omitting one stanza, as being equally feeble in the original and translation.

Toi, pour qui seule je respire,
Objèt du plus fidèle amour,
Flores, pour chanter son martyre,
Vient ici dévancer le jour.

Le soleil qui va reparoître,
Peut-il m'annoncer un plaisir?
Puis-je en sentir à voir renaitre,
Des fleurs que je ne puis t'offrir?

Ah! que du moins dans ces retraites
Tout peigne aujourdhui mon ardeur;
Tracez, peignez blanches fleurettes,
Le nom charmant de Blanche-Fleur.

Ton anneau calme mes allarmes,
Il me rassure sur tes jours;
Il n'est terni que par mes larmes;
Ah! puisse-t-il briller toujours!

Crois moi, la seule sympathie,
M'éclaireroit sur ton malheur:

Pour savoir le sort de m'amie,
Mon talisman est dans mon cœur.

Dieu de Blanche-Fleur, je t'implore,
Je jure de suivre ta loi,
Si par toi celle que j'adore,
Peut un jour me donner sa foi.

TRANSLATION.

Fair, for whom I breathe, for whom
I glow with love to last for aye!
Flores, here to chaunt his doom,
Hastes, or ever breaks the day.

The sun begins to re-appear;
Can this bring aught of joy to me?
Of joy to see reviving here
Those flowers I cannot offer thee?

At least, within this plat, to day
Let all things paint my true love's power:
And ye, flowrets fair, portray
The charming name of my *Fair-Flower*.

Thy ring composes all my fears;
That thou art safe by this I know:
'Tis dimm'd by nothing but my tears:
Ah! may it ever sparkle so!

Yet trust me, sympathy alone,
Thy weal or woe would soon impart:
To make my true love's hap be known,
My talisman is in my heart.

Thou, mighty God of my Blanche-Fleur,
To thee I'll bow for evermore;
So, by thy aid I may procure
The hand of her whom I adore.

The only remaining piece of poetry in the French volume is an attempt to revive the celebrated song of Rolland, which was said to have had the most animating effect on the courage of the Norman soldiery, and to have been the prelude to the decisive victory at Hastings. M. de Tressan is of opinion, that if any vestiges of this ancient war-song still remain, they ought to be found among the peasants of the Pyrenees; and he adds, that the Marquis du Viviers

Lausac, whose estates were situated in those mountains, had collected several fragments, which appear to belong to the poem in question. These fragments were united by M. de Tressan, and framed into the following sketch:

O Rolland! honneur de la France,
Que par toi mon bras soit vainqueur!
Dirige le fer de ma lance
A percer le front ou le cœur
Du fier ennemi qui s'avance!
Que son sang, coulant à grands flots,
De ses flancs, ou de sa visière,
Bouillonne encor sur la poussière,
En baignant les pieds des chevaux!
O Rolland! &c.

TRANSLATION.

O Rolland! the renown of France!
Urge my arm with conquering might!
Guide the steel-head of my lance,
The proud front or heart to smite,
Of what foe soe'er advance!

May I see life's gushing flood,
From shatter'd helm, or mangled side,
Mix with dust its bubbling tide,
And bathe my courser's hoofs in blood.

For the purpose of bringing together all Mr. Way's smaller compositions, I shall take the liberty of adding to these beautiful specimens of translated poetry, a small original poem which has been already printed by his permission, but which it is now time to restore to its proper owner. Mr. Way sent it to me in 1790, together with some extracts from 'England's Heli-'con' (a scarce miscellany of the 16th century), for the purpose of being inserted in a compilation then printing, under the title of 'Specimens of the Early 'English Poets.' Having received no intimation of its being modern, I concluded (as a much better judge might possibly have done) that this was one of those few happy effusions of our old writers, in which an elegant thought had not been overwhelmed by a profusion of ornament; or that its uniform elegance was owing to its having been abridged from a much longer poem. The next post, however, informed me, that Mr. Way had employed me, as Moliere used his

old woman, for the purpose of trying his talents on an unpractised ear, before he ventured to submit it to the severity of general criticism.

THE IVY.

How yonder Ivy courts the oak,
And clips it with a false embrace!
So I abide a wanton's yoke,
And yield me to a smiling face:
And both our deaths will prove, I guess,
The triumph of unthankfulness.

How fain the tree would swell its rind!
But, vainly trying, it decays,
So fares it with my shackled mind;
So wastes the vigour of my days:
And soon our deaths will prove, I guess,
The triumph of unthankfulness.

A lass, forlorn for lack of grace,
My kindly pity first did move;
And, in a little moment's space,
This pity did engender love:
And now my death must prove, I guess,
The triumph of unthankfulness.

For now she rules me with her look,
And round me winds her harlot chain;
Whilst, by a strange enchantment struck,
My nobler will recoils in vain.
And soon my death will prove, I guess,
The triumph of unthankfulness.

But, had the oak denied its shade,
The weed had trail'd in dust below;
And she, had I her suit gainsaid,
Might still have pined in want and woe:
Now, both our deaths will prove, I guess,
The triumph of unthankfulness.

If the foregoing were considered as an insulated specimen, it would probably be thought an unusual instance of successful imitation; but the reader of the preceding pages will have observed, that this antiquated style was become perfectly familiar to the translator of the fabliaux. The earliest of Mr. Way's compositions, which I have seen, are a description of the *Montem*, written at Eton, and some love-elegies composed at Oxford: the former, a Hudibrastic poem in imitation of Butler; the latter, constructed on the

model of Pope, and exhibiting his characteristick elegance of diction, and uniformity of cadence. But the style of the fabliaux may be considered as original; it is not copied from any individual writer, but is evidently the appropriate manner of the author, formed upon a deliberate and attentive comparison of all the best writers who have distinguished the several periods of our literature. Indeed, the peculiarity of Mr. Way's studies suggested the choice of his subjects: his taste led him to poetry, and his indolence to translation; and he found, in translating the publications of M. Le Grand and M. de Tressan, an employment perfectly suited to his favourite and habitual modes of expression.

Mr. Gray has observed, in one of his letters to Mr. West, that 'the language of poetry is never the 'language of the day;' and his correspondent, without quite acceding to the universality of this axiom, remarks, in his turn, that 'old words revived are of 'excellent use in tales: they add (says he) a certain 'drollery to the comic, and a romantic gravity to the 'serious, which are both charming in their kind; and 'this way of charming Dryden understood very well.' This is certainly true: besides which, there are many obvious reasons for endeavouring to preserve such

old words as are not quite obsolete and unintelligible, because they are generally simple, often very energetic, and seldom exactly synonymous with their modern substitutes: at all events, though they should be unnecessary for the purpose of giving strength or precision, they have the merit of giving variety to the sentence.

But the mere adoption of a few antiquated words is not alone sufficient to constitute an antiquated style. La Fontaine, whom the French consider as a model of elegant simplicity, and whose phraseology is now regarded as almost essential to every humorous composition, has been more solicitous to imitate the construction and grammatical arrangement of Clement Marot, and other poets of the 16th century, than to engraft on modern language a number of words gleaned from obsolete glossaries. He seems to have been aware, that from the mechanism of the present European languages, in which so much is performed by prepositions and auxiliary verbs, their phraseology must, of necessity, become languid and diffuse, in the same proportion as they advance in precision and exactness of meaning; and that the ruder constructions of sentences in use amongst our ancestors, had a conciseness and rapidity which is scarcely attainable

by the more artificial rules of modern composition. At the same time it was evident that these advantages were balanced, in the works of the early writers, by correspondent defects; that one rich and energetic verse was frequently accompanied by a number of confused and frigid lines, and that this inequality of style, which could only be excused during the infancy of criticism, would not be tolerated by modern readers. This seems to have suggested to him the expedient of adopting that strange kind of measure (which, from his example, is become fashionable in France), in which the duration of the line is regulated only by the meaning, and consists of any number of syllables, from one to ten, that may happen to suit the convenience of the writer.

Such a contrivance, however, is only a mode of evading the difficulty which Mr. Way wished to overcome. Though he felt that it was impossible to unite, into a consistent and uniform style, the elaborate diction and musical cadences of Pope, with the artless syntax and irregular numbers of Chaucer; yet he conceived that a language *of perfect simplicity* is capable of a great deal of variety, and that it may, by proper gradations, be brought to assume almost any character; and to assimilate with the appropriate

diction of every period of our literature. 'He that 'will write well in any tongue (says old Roger 'Ascham), must follow the counsel of Aristotle: to 'speak *as the common people do;* to think as wise men 'do:' and a copious model of this popular style is preserved in the common English translation of the sacred writings. From this, Mr. Way principally formed his vocabulary; to which he has endeavoured to give the colouring of a somewhat higher antiquity, by adopting a number of elliptical phrases; by occasionally throwing the rhyme on an unimportant syllable; and by a few similar imitations of the characteristick negligence of our early versifiers.

These remarks, compiled from a few hints contained in Mr. Way's papers, are not inserted with any view of conciliating the favour of the reader towards a work, the failure or success of which can no longer either disappoint or gratify the wishes of its author; but for the purpose of recording those opinions which gave a direction to his efforts. A translation of a few obsolete Norman stories can only please by the graces of language and versification; but, where these are found, the reader often feels a degree of interest in exploring the sources from whence his amusement is derived, and in searching, through the history of

the author, for those peculiar opinions and habits which modify the effects of general education, and produce the differences of literary character observable in contemporary writers, in the same manner as the infinitely various combinations of similar features distinguish the physical individuals.

It is a trite observation, that the life of an author is seldom capable of affording much amusement to the reader; and that of Mr. Way was particularly barren of incident: for his biographer would have little to relate, except that he was educated at Eton, from whence he went to Oxford, and afterwards to the Temple; and that having married early in life, he retired almost immediately to a small country seat in Essex, where he died, on the 26th of April, 1799, after a very short illness, in the 43d year of his age. Finding himself possessed of a fortune which seemed to remove the absolute necessity of addicting himself to any profession, though insufficient without strict economy to meet the wants of a growing family, he voluntarily devoted himself to retirement, which was not much interrupted by an annual visit of a month to some near relations in the country, and by a fortnight usually allotted to an old friend in London. Under such circumstances it was scarcely possible

that he should fail to contract some peculiarities; because, being neither solicitous for wealth nor power, and having no habitual occupations or amusements which required the assistance of society, he was not likely to imitate, or even to notice the vicissitudes which fashion is daily producing in the dress, and gestures, and manners, and language, and opinions of what is called the world. He conceived that happiness is the only rational object of pursuit; and he believed that the means of happiness are to be found in the practice of religion. The history of that religion therefore, the means by which it was established, the evidence on which it rests, the hopes it holds out, the duties it inculcates, and the opinions of its different sectaries, became the object of his constant studies and daily meditation. His principal amusement was literature, and particularly poetry: and from this choice of occupations and amusements, a choice dictated partly by reflection, and partly, perhaps, by the effects of situation and early habit, he certainly acquired such a constant flow of cheerfulness, as a life of more activity and a greater variety of resource, often fails to produce.

It has been remarked, that he had some peculiarities; but they were such as it is not easy to describe,

because they were not the result of eccentricity, or of any marked deviation from general habits. There was nothing in them on which ridicule could fasten. His manners were easy and unembarrassed, and his address particularly attractive, from being marked with that best sort of politeness, which is the expression of benevolence. But that perfect simplicity of demeanour which borrows nothing from imitation, has certainly a singular appearance in the eyes of those who are only conversant with artificial society: perhaps, indeed, few peculiarities are more striking than a total absence of all affectation.

His conversation was very characteristick, and extremely amusing; particularly on those topics which seemed most remote from his usual pursuits, and in which he was led to take an interest only by that kindness of disposition which prevented him from viewing with indifference any amusement of his friends. There are probably few subjects less propitious to the display of literary acquirements than the discussion of a fox-chace, yet I have seen him voluntarily engage even with this untoward argument: and he applied with such taste and sagacity the learning he had acquired from Master Turberville and the Book of St. Albans; his language was so picturesque; and he

229

drew so comical a parallel between the opinions of practitioners in the science in different ages, that the effect was scarcely less striking than if Sir Tristram, or King Arthur, had unexpectedly descended amongst a company of modern sportsmen. On all occasions the Cervantic turn of his humour was singularly heightened by his researches in antiquarian knowledge.

It is impossible to consider such a simple and amiable character without lamenting that he neglected to become his own biographer; because no species of writing, perhaps, is more capable of uniting amusement with utility than the genuine unvarnished picture of private life; and certainly no species of writing is so uncommon. Many, indeed, have professed to lay the whole contents of their memory before the publick, and to expose all their thoughts and actions to its inspection: but in these reports of their conscience, whether under the humble name of 'confessions,' or the more sincere title of 'appeals to 'posterity,' we generally find modes of acting and feeling more remote from common nature, than those of an Amadis or a Cassandra; and are unable to draw any practical lesson from such a delineation, unless it

be that much real vice and folly may result from a sickly sensibility and an over-delicate organization.

An eminent French writer has observed, that even in novels, and other fictitious descriptions of human nature, where the hero and heroine are rewarded by the completion of all their wishes, their happiness is announced, indeed, but never particularized: and that no writer has yet been found, whose confidence in his imagination and powers of amusement, was so sturdy as to cope with the monotony of domestick felicity. If this sarcastic remark be at all just, it must be because the painter of ideal life is in want of real models from which he may copy his delineations. In every other science we find authentick records of experiments, which have been made with caution, and described with minute and circumstantial accuracy; but in the great art of being happy, the experience of every man becomes useless to the rest of the world. Those who are most attached to life, and most desirous of protracting its duration, have probably passed some hours which they would willingly have retrenched from the sum of existence, and have endeavoured, with more or less success, to quicken their passage. It may be presumed, therefore, that the

history of a practical moralist, who was forced to construct his scheme of happiness with common materials, and to fight the tediousness of life with weapons which are within every man's reach, would prove neither useless nor unentertaining. Such a moralist was Mr. Way. He was not, like the imaginary Rasselas, a prince, or a traveller; but he found, in the affection of his wife, in the duty of his children, and the hopes afforded by religion, a compensation for all the disappointments and miseries to which life is subject.

For the purpose of exhibiting a specimen of the poetical style which prevailed in England, at the time when many of the French fabliaux were composed, Mr. Way had intended to place at the end of this volume, Lydgate's translation of the 'Lay de 'Oiselet' (Lay of the Little Bird), which was printed by Copland, under the title of 'The Chorle and the 'Byrde,' and afterwards inserted under the altered appellation of 'Hermes's Bird,' in Ashmole's Theatrum Chemicum. And as that piece would have fully answered Mr. Way's intentions, by convincing the reader that it was impossible to adopt, in a publi-

cation intended for readers of the present day, a phraseology so very obsolete as that of Lydgate, I should have considered it as my duty to follow the wishes of my friend, but that I thought the same purpose might be answered by means of a much more amusing poem, which had not hitherto appeared in print, and which is cited with some praise in Dr. Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, and in Mr. Warton's History. This is the Lay of *Launfal* (Lanval), translated from Mlle. Marie's French original, by Thomas Chestre, who flourished, as our poetical antiquaries suppose, in the reign of Henry VI.; and who seems to have given a faithful, as well as spirited version of this old Breton story.

I have only to add, that the transcript from the original MSS. in the Cotton Library, was made by a gentleman on whose fidelity the reader may safely rely; and that in the printed copy I have exactly adhered to that transcript: this old mode of spelling will, perhaps, at first appear rather puzzling to some readers; but I have endeavoured, by means of glossarial notes, to render the story as intelligible as I could, without departing from the obsolete orthography.

COTTON MS. CALIGULA, A. 11.

LAUNFAL MILES.

Be (1) douȝty Artour's *dawes*, (2)
That hold Engelond yn good lawes,
Ther fell a wondyr cas,
Of a *ley* (3) that was ysette,
That *hyȝt* (4) Launfal, and *hatte* ȝette;
Now herkeney how hyt was.

Douȝty Artour, som whyle,
Sojournede yn Kardeuyle,
Wyth joye and greet solas:
And knyȝtes that were profitable,
With Artour of the round table;
Never noon better ther *nas*. (5)

Sere Persevall, and Sere Gawayn,
Syr Gyheryes, and Syr Agrafrayn,

1 By. 2 Days. 3 Lay.
4 Height—*i. e.* was called Launfal, and yet is.
5 Ne was (was not).

And Launcelot du Lake;
Syr Kay, and Syr Ewayn,
That well *coure* (1) fyȝte yn playn,
Bateles for to take.

Kyng Ban Booȝt, and Kyng Bos,
Of *ham* (2) this was a greet *los*, (3)
Men sawe *tho* (4) nowher *her make:* (5)
Syr Galafre, and Syr Launfale,
Wherof a noble tale,
Among us schall awake.

With Artour there was a bacheler,
And hadde y-be well many a ȝer,
Launfal for *sor* (6) he hyȝt:
He gaf gyftys largelyche,
Gold and sylever, and *clodens* (7) ryche,
To squyer and to knyȝt.

For hys *largesse* (8) and hys bounte,
The kynges stuward made was he,

1 Couth, could. 2 Them. 3 Praise. 4 Then.
5 Their mate, their fellow. 6 Sure. 7 Clothings, clothes.
8 Liberality.

Ten yer, y you plyȝt;
Of all the knyȝtes of the table rounde,
So *large* (1) ther was noon y founde,
Be dayes ne be nyzt.

So hyt befyll yn the tenthe ȝere,
Marlyn was Artour's counsalere;
He *radd* (2) hym for to wende
To Kyng Ryon, of Irlond ryȝt,
And fette hym ther a lady bryȝt,
Gwennere (3) hys douȝtyr, *hende*. (4)

So he dede; and hom her brouȝt,
But Syr Launfal lykede her noȝt,
Ne other knyȝtes that wer hende;
For the lady *bar los of swych word*, (5)
That she hadde *lemmannys* (6) *unther* (7) her lord,
So *fele* (8) ther was noon ende.

They wer ywedded, as y you say,
Upon a Wytsonday,

1 Liberal. 2 Advised. 3 Guenever. 4 Graceful, accomplished, courteous. 5 Bare a reputation of such import. 6 Lovers. 7 Besides. 8 Many.

Before princes of moch pryde:
No man ne may telle yn tale,
What folk ther was at that *bredale*, (1)
Of countreys fer and wyde.

No nother man was yn halle ysette,
But he wer prelat, *other* (2) baronette;
In herte ys nazt to hyde
Yf they satte noȝt all ylyke:
Har, (3) servyse was good and ryche,
Carteyn yn ech a syde.

And whan the lordes hadde ete yn the halle,
And the clothes wer drawen alle,
As ye mowe her and *lythe*, (4)
The botelers sent yn wynn,
To all the lordes that wer theryn,
With chere bothe glad and blythe.

The quene yaf yftes for the nonce,
Gold and silver and precyous stonys,
Her curtasye to *kythe*. (5)

1 Bride-ale, marriage feast 2 Or. 3 Their. 4 Listen.
5 Make known.

Everych knyȝt sche ȝaf *broche*, (1) other ryng;
But Syr Launfal sche yaf no thyng;
That grevede hym manȳ a *syde*. (2)

And when the bredale was at ende,
Launfal tok hys leve to *wende*, (3)
At Artour the kyng.
And seyde, a lettere was to hym come,
That deth hadde hys fadyr *ynome*; (4)
He most to hys beryyng.

Tho seyde Kyng Artour, that was hende,
'Launfal, yf you wylt fro me wende,
'Tak wyth *the* (5) greet spendyng;
'And my suster sones two,
'Bothe they schull with the go,
'At hom the for to bryng.'

Launfal tok leve without fable,
With knyȝtes of the rounde table,
And wente forth yn his journé;
Tyl he com to Karlyoun,

1 Properly *the tongue of a buckle*, but used to signify buckles, clasps, or almost any similar ornaments. 2 (*Sithe*) time. 3 To go
4 Taken. 5 Thee.

To the *meyrys* (1) hous of the toune,
Hys servaunt that hadde ybe.

The meyr stod, as ye may here,
And saw hym come ryde up *anblere*, (2)
With two knyȝtes, and other *mayné*: (3)
Agayns (4) hym he hath wey ynome,
And seyde, 'Syr, thou art well-come,
'How faryth our kyng, tel me?'

Launfal answerede and seyde than,
'He faryth as well as any man,
'And elles greet *ruthe* (5) hyt wore;
'But, syr meyr, without *lesyng*, (6)
'I am *the partyth* (7) from the kyng,
'And that rewyth me sore.

'Ne this thar noman, benethe ne above,
'For the Kyng Artour's love,
'Onowre me never more.
'But, syr meyr, I pray the, per amour,

1 Mayor's. 2 On his ambler? 3 *Maisnie*, Fr. household, attendants. 4 Towards. 5 Pity. 6 Lying. deceiving. 7 Departed, *i. e.* separated.

'May y take with the séjour?
'Som tyme we knewe us yore!'

The meyr stod and bethoȝte hym there,
What myȝt be hys answere,
And to hym than gan he sayn,—
'Syr, vii knyȝtes *han her har in ynome*, (1)
('And ever y wayte whan they wyl come,)
'That arn of lytyll Bretayne.'

Launfal turnede hymself and *lowȝ*, (2)
Therof he hadde scorn inowȝ,
And seyde to hys knyȝtes tweyne,
'Now may ye se swych ys service
'Unther a lord of lytyll pryse!
'How he may therof be fayn.'

Launfal awayward gan to ryde;
The meyr bad he schuld abyde,
And seyde in thys manere;
'Syr, yn a chamber, by my orchard syde,
'Ther may ye dwelle wyth joye and pryde,
'ȝyf hyt your wyll were.'

1 Have here their inn (*lodging*) taken. 2 Laughed.

Launfal *anoon ryȝtes ;* (1)
He and hys two knyȝtes,
Sojournede there *in fere :* (2)
So *san gelyth* (3) hys good he besette,
That he ware yn greet dette,
Ryȝt yn the ferst yere.

So hyt befell at Pentecost,
Swych tyme as the holy gost,
Among mankend gan lyȝt ;
That Syr Huwe, and Syr Jon,
Tok hir leve for to gon
At Syr Launfal the knyȝt.

They seyd, ' Sir, our robes beth to-rent,
' And your tresour ys al y spent,
' And we goth ewyll y dyȝt ;'
Thanne sayde Syr Launfal to the knyȝtes fre,
' Tell ye no man of my poverté,
' For the love of God Almyȝt !'

The knyȝtes answerede, and seyde tho,
That they n'olde hym *wreye* (4) never mo,

1 Right anon. 2 Together. 3 This unintelligible word may possibly be a mistake in the MSS. 4 Wray, bewray, betray.

All this worlde to wynne;
With that word they wente hym fro,
To Glastyngbery bothe two,
Ther Kyng Artour was inne.

The Kyng sawe the knyȝtes hende,
And aȝens ham he gan wende,
For they wer of hys kinne.
Noon other robes they ne hadde,
Than they owt with ham ladde;
And tho wer to-tore, and thynne.

Than seyde Quene Gwenore, that was fel,
'How faryth the prowde knyȝt Launfal?
'May he hys armes welde?'
'ȝe, madame (sayde the knȝtes than),
'He faryth as wel as any man,
'And ellys God hyt schelde!'

Moche worchyp and greet honour,
To Gonore the Quene, and Kyng Artour,
Of Syr Launfal they telde:
And seyd, 'he lovede us so,
'That he wold us ever mo,
'At wyll have yhelde:

'But upon a rayny day hyt befel,
'At an huntynge wente Syr Launfal,
'To chasy in holtis hore;
'In our old robes we yede that day,
'And thus we ben ywent awȧy,
'As we before hym *wore*.' (1)

Glad was Artour the king,
That Launfal was yn good lykyng;
The quene hyt rewe wel sore;
For sche wold, with all her myȝt,
That he hadde be, bothe day and nyȝt,
In paynys more and more.

Upon a day of the Trinité,
A feste, of greet solempnité,
In Carlyoun was holde;
Erles and barones of that countré,
Ladyes, and *borieces* (2) of that cité,
Thyder come both *yough* (3) and old.

But Launfal, for hys poverté,
Was not bede to that *semblé*, (4)

1 Were—*i. e.* as we were dressed when in his company.
2 Burgesses. 3 Young. 4 Assembly.

Lyte (1) men of hym told:
The meyr to the feste was of sent;
The meyry's douȝter to Launfal went,
And axede yf he wolde,

In halle dyne with her that day;
The *damesele*, (2) he seyde, 'nay!
'To dyne I have no herte.
'Thre dayes ther ben agone,
'Mete ne drynke set y noon,
'And all was for povert!

'To day to the cherche y wold have gon,
'But me *fawtede* (3) hosyn and shon,
'Clenly brech, and scherte,
'And, for defawte of clodynge,
'Ne myȝte y yn with the peple *thrynge*; (4)
'No wonther *douȝ* (5) me smerte?

'But O ying damesele, y pray ye,
'Sadel and brydel leve thou me,
'A whyle for to ryde?
'That y myȝte comfortede be,

1 Little. 2 Damoisel, bachelor, young man.
3 Faulted—*i. e.* failed. 4 Throng. 5 Though.

'By a launde *unther* (1) thys cyté,
'All yn thys *undern tyde.*'

Launfal dyȝte hys courser,
Withoute *knave*, (2) other squyer,
He rood with lytyll pryde;
Hys hors *slod*, (3) and fel yn the fen,
Wherfore hym scornede many men,
Abowte hym fer and wyde.

Pouerly (4) the knyȝt to hors gan sprynge;
For to *dryve away looking*, (5)
He rood toward the west:
The wether was hot the *undern tyde*,
He lyȝte adoun, and gan abyde
Under a fayr forest.

And, for hete of the wedere,
Hys mantell he *feld* (6) togydere,

1 The word *under* is used by our author with great latitude; indeed it seems that as yet very few of the prepositions had a strict and definite application. In the next line *undern tyde* seems to mean afternoon. 2 Boy. 3 Slid. 4 Powerfully.
5 To avoid the spectators. 6 Folded.

And sette hym down to reste:
Thus sat the knyȝt yn symplyté;
In the schadowe, unther a tre,
This that hym liked best.

As he sat, yn sorow, and sore,
He sawe come out of holtes hore,
Gentyll maydenes two;
Har kerteles wer of Inde *sandel;* (1)
Ilasced smalle, jolyf, and welle;
Ther myght noon gayer go.

Har manteles wer of grene felwet,
Ybordured with gold, ryȝt wel ysette,
Ipelured (2) with *gris and gro:* (3)
Har heddys wer dyȝt well with alle,
Everych hadde oon a jolyf coronall,
Wyth sixty gemmys and mo.

Har faces wer whyt as snow, or downe;
Har *rode* (4) was rede, har eyn wer broune,

1 A thin silk. Chaucer writes it *sendall.* 2 Furred.

3 Gris and gro (gray) seem synonymous; but as Mr. Tyrwhitt observes, the word *gris* is used by Chaucer and others, to express *generally* any valuable fur. 4 Complexion.

I saw never non swyche,
That oon bar of gold a basyn,
That other a towayle whyt and fyn,
Of selk that was good and ryche.

Har kercheves wer well *schyre* (1)
Arayd with ryche gold wyre:
Launfal began to *syche.* (2)
They come to hym over the heth;
He was curteys, and ayens hem geth;
And greette *hem* (3) myldelyche.

'Damesels (he seyde) God you se!'
'Syr knyȝt (they seyde) well the be!
'Our lady, dame Tryamour,
'Bad thou schuldest com speke with here,
'ȝyf it were thy wylle, Sere,
'Withoute more séjour.'

Launfal hem grauntede curteyslyche,
And went wyth hem myldelyche;
They wheryn whyt as flour;
And when they come in the forest an hyȝ,

1 Sheer, completely. 2 Sigh. 3 Them.

A pavilioun *ytèld* (1) he syȝ,
With merthe and *mochell* (2) honour.

The pavyloun was *wrouth*, (3) for sothe y wys,
All of werk of *Sarsynys*; (4)
The *pomelles*, (5) of crystall;
Upon the top an *ern* (6) ther stod,
Of *bournede* (7) gold, ryche and good,
Iflorysshed with ryche *amall*. (8)

Hys eyn wer carbonkeles bryȝt,
As the mone the schon a nyȝt,
That *spreteth* (9) out ovyr all.
Alysaundre the conquerour,
Ne Kyng Artour in hys most honour,
Ne hadde noon *swyche quell*. (10)

He fond in the pavyloun
The kynges douȝter of Olyroun;
Dame Tryamour that hyȝte.
Her fadyr was kyng of Fayrye,

1 Constructed, Fr. 2 Much. 3 Wrought. 4 *Sarrasinois*, Fr. Saracen, eastern work. 5 The knobs on the tent poles. 6 An eagle. 7 Burnished. 8 Email, Fr. enamel. 9 Spreadeth. 10 I cannot understand this phrase.

Of *occient* (1) far and nyȝe,
A man of mochel myȝte.

In the pavyloun he fond a bed of prys,
Iheled (2) with purpur *bys*, (3)
That *semyle* (4) was of syȝte;
Ther inne lay that lady gent,
That after Syr Launfal hadde ysent
That *lefsome* (5) *lemede* (6) bryȝt.

For hete her clothes down sche dede,
Almost to her gerdyl stede;
Than lay sche uncovert:
She was as whyt as lylie yn May,
Or snow that sneweth in wynterys day;
He seygh never non so *pert*. (7)

The rede rose, when sche ys newe,
Aȝens her *rode* (8) nes nauȝt of hewe,
I dar wel say yn *sert*. (9)
Her here schon as gold wyre,

1 Ocean. 2 Covered. 3 Should it be 'purpure *and* bice,' i. e. *blue?* 4 Seemly. 5 Lovesome, *i. e.* lovely. 6 Shone. 7 Seemly, beautiful. 8 Complexion. 9 Certes, certainly.

May no man rede her atyre,
Ne nauȝt well thenke ȝn herte.

Sche seyde, 'Launfal, my leman swete,
'Al my joye for the y lete,
'Swetyng par amour!
'Ther nys no man in Cristenté
'That I love so moche as the;
'Kyng neyther emperour!'

Launfal beheld that swete wyȝt,
All hys love in her was lyȝt;
And keste that swete flour.
And sat adoun her bysyde,
And seyde, 'Swetyng! what so betyde,
'I am to thyn honeur!'

Sche seyde, 'Syr knyȝt, gentyl and hende,
'I wot thy stat, order, and ende;
'Be nauȝt aschamed of me!
'Yf thou wylt truly to me take,
'And all wemen for me forsake,
'Ryche I wyll make the.

'I wyll the geve an *alner*, (1)
'I made of sylk and of gold cler,
'Wyth fayre ymages thre:
'As oft thou puttest the hond ther inne,
'A mark of gold thou shalt wynne,
'In wat place that thou be.

'Also,' sche seyde, 'Syr Launfal,
'I ȝeve the Blaunchard, my stede bel,
'And Gyfre my owen knave:
'And of my armes *oo pensel* (2)
'With thre ermyns ypeynted well,
'Also thou shalt have.

'In werre, ne yn tournement,
'Ne schall the greve noȝt knyȝtes *dent*, (3)
'So well I schall the save:'—
Than answerede the gentyl knyȝt,
And seyde, 'Gramercy, my swete wyȝt,
'No better *hepte y have*. (4)

1 Alner for almoner—*i. e. aumoniere*, a purse.
2 A pencel (penoncel) is a small banner.
3 Dint, stroke. 4 Hoped I to have.

The damesel gan her up sette,
And bad her maydenes her fette
To hyr hondys water clere:
Hyt was ydo wythout lette,
The cloth was spred, the bord was sette,
They went to have sopere.

Mete and drynk they had afyn,
Pyement, clare, and reynysch wyn,
(And elles greet wonder yt wer,)
Whan they had sowpeth, and the day was gon,
They went to bedde, and that anon;
Launfal and sche in fere.

For play lytyll they sclepte that nyȝt;
Till on morn hyt was day lyȝt,
Sche bad hym aryse anoon.
Hy seyde to hym 'Syr, gantyl knyȝt,
'And thou wylt speke with me any *wyȝt*, (1)
'To a *derne stede* (2) thou gon.

'Well privyly I woll come to the,
'No man alyve ne schall me se;

1 Whit. 2 A dark place.

'As stylle as any ston.'
Tho was Launfal glad and blythe;
Ne cowde no man hys joy kythe,
And kest her well good won.

'But of o thyng, syr knyȝt, I warne the;
'That thou make no bost of me,
'For *no kennes mede.* (1)
'And yf thou dost, y warny the before,
'All my love thou hast forlore.'—
And thus to hym sche seyde.

Launfal took his leve to wende;
Gyfre *kedde* (2) *that he was hende,*
And brought Launfal hys stede;
Launfal lepte into the *arsoun,* (3)
And rood hom to Karlyoun,
In hys pouer wede.

Tho was the knyȝt yn herte at wylle:
In hys chamber he hyld hym stylle,
All that undern tyde;
Than come ther thorwgh the cyté ten,

1 No kind of reward. 2 Perceived that he was ready.
3 Arçon, Fr.

Well *yharneyseyth* (1) men,
Upon ten *somers* (2) ryde.

Some with sylver, some with gold,
All to Syr Launfal hyt *schold*, (3)
To presente hym with pryde;
With ryche clothes, and armure bryȝt;
They axede after Launfal the knyȝt,
Whar he gan abyde.

The yong men wer clodeth yn ynde;
Gyfre, he rood all behynde,
Up Blaunchard whyt as flour:
Tho seyde a boy, that yn the market stod,
'How *fer* (4) schall all this good?
'Tell us per amour.'

Tho seyd Gyfre, 'hyt ys ysent,
'To Syr Launfal yn present,
'That hath leved in greet dolour.'

1 Well armed, or well dressed.
2 Baggage horses, *sommari*, Italian.
3 Should go. 4 Fare—to whom shall it go?

Than seyde the boy, 'nys he but *awreche* (1)
'What thar any man of hym recchè:
'At the meyre's hous he taketh séjour.'

At the meyre's hous they gan alyȝte,
And presented the noble knyȝte,
With swych good as hym was sent:
And when the meyr seyȝ that richesse,
And Syr Launfale's noblenesse,
He held hymself foule yschent.

Tho seyd the meyr 'Syr, per charité,
'In hall today that thou wylte ete wyth me:—
'Yesterday, y hadde yment,
'At the feste we wold have be *ynsame*; (2)
'And yhadde solas and game;
'And erst thou wer y went.'

'Syr meyr, God *for yelde* (3) the!
'Whyles y was yn my poverté,

1 He is not without his revenge, (*i. e.* compensation,) whatever any man may think of him.

2 Together. 3 Repay.

'Thou bede me never dyne;
'Now I have more gold and fe,
'That myne frendes have sent me,
'Than thou and alle *dyne!*' (1)

Ye meyr for schame away ȝede;
Launfal in purpure gan hym *schrede*, (2)
Ipelured with whyt ermyne.
All that Launfal hadde *borwyth* (3) before
Gyfre, be tale, and be score,
ȝald it well and fyne.

Launfal helde ryche festes;
Fyfty fedde pouere gestes,
That yn myschef wer.
Fyfty bouȝte stronge stedes;
Fyfty yaf ryche wedes,
To knyȝtes and squyer:

Fyfty rewardede relygyous;
Fyfty delyverede pouere prysouns,
And made ham quyt and schere,
Fyfty clodede gestours;

1 Thine. 2 Shroud. 3 Borrowed.

To many men he dede honours,
In countreys fer and nere.

All the lordes of Karlyoun
Lette crye a tournament yn the toun,
For love of Syr Launfal;
And for Blaunchard hys good stede,
To wyte how hym wolde spede,
That was ymade so well.

And whan the day was ycome,
That the justes were yn ynome,
They ryde out all so *snell:* (1)
Trompours gon har bemes blowe,
The lordes ryden out a rowe,
That were yn that castell.

Ther began the tournement,
And ech knyȝt leyd on other good dent,
With mases and with swordes bothe;
Me myȝte yse some therfore,
Stedes ywonne, and some ylore,
And knyȝtes wonther wroȝth.

1 Swift.

Sith the rounde table was,
A bettere tournement ther nas,
I dar wel saye for sothe:
Many a lord of Karlyoun
That day were y bore adoun,
Certayn, withouten othe.

Of Karlyoun, the rych constable
Rod to Launfal, without fable,
He nolde no longer abyde;
He smot to Launfal and he to hym:
Well sterne strokes, and well grym,
Ther wer yn eche a syde.

Launfal was of hym yware,
Out of hys sadell he hym bare,
To ground that ylke tyde:
And whan the constable was bore adoun,
Gyfre lept yn to the arsoun,
And awey he gan to ryde.

The Earl of Chester *thus of segh;* (1)
For wrythe yn herte he was *wod negh,* (2)

1 Saw this. 2 Nigh mad.

And rood to Syr Launfale;
And smot hym in the helm on hegh;
That the crest adoun flegh,
Thus seyd the Frenssch tale.

Launfal was mochel of myȝt,
Of hys stede he dede hym lyȝt,
And bar hym doun in the dale:
Than come ther, Syr Launfal abowte,
Of Walssche knyȝtes a greet rowte,
The numbre *y nat how fale.* (1)

Than myȝte *mede* (2) scheldes ryve,
Speres to-breste, and to-dryve,
Behynde and eke before;
Thoruȝ Launfal and hys stedes dent,
Many a knyȝt, varement,
To ground was ybore.

So the prys of that tournay
Was delyvered to Launfal that day,
Without othe yswore.
Launfal rood to Karlyoun,

1 I know not how many.

2 Perhaps it should be *me do*—*i. e.* men do.

To the meyry's house in the toun,
And many a lord hym before.

And than the noble knyȝt Launfal
Held a feste, ryche and ryall,
That leste fourtenyȝt:
Erles and barouns fale,
Semely wer sette yn *sale*, (1)
And ryally wer ydyȝt.

And every [time] Dame Teramour,
Sche com to Syr Launfal bowr,
A day when hyt was nyȝt;
Of all that ever wer ther tho,
Segh *he* (2) non but they two,
Gyfre, and Launfal the knyȝt.

A knyȝt ther was yn Lumbardye,
To Syr Launfal hadde he greet envye;
Syr Valentyne he hyȝte:
He herde speke of Syr Launfal,
That he couth justy well,
And was a man of mochell myȝte.

1 *Salle*, hall. 2 Her.

Syr Valentyne was wonther strong,
Fyftene feete he was longe,
Hym poȝte (1) he brente bryȝte,
But (2) he myȝte with Launfal pleye,
In the feld, betwene ham tweye,
To justy, other to fyȝte.

Syr Valentyne sat yn hys halle,
His massengere he let y-calle,
And seyd, he moste wende
To Syr Launfall the noble knyȝt,
That was yholde so mychel of myȝt,
To Bretayne he wolde hym sende.

'And sey him, for love of his lemman,
'Yf sche be any gantyle woman,
'Courteys *fra other hende*, (3)
'That he come with me to juste,
'To kepe hys harneys from the rustė,
'And elles hys manhod schende.'

The messenger ys forth ywent
To *tho* (4) hys lordys commaundement;

1 *In posté*, Fr. in power. 2 Unless.
3 Above other beauties. 4 To do.

He hadde wynde at wylle:
Whan he was over the water ycome,
The way to Syr Launfal he hath ynome,
And grette hym with wordes stylle.

And seyd, 'Syr, my lord Syr Valentyne,
'A noble werrour and *queynte* of *gynne* (1),
'Hath me sent the tylle;
'And prayeth the, for thy lemmanes sake,
'Thou schuldest with hym justes take.'—
Tho *louȝ Launfal full stylle.* (2)

And seyde, as he was gentyl knyȝt,
Thylke day a fourtenyȝt,
He wold with hym play;
He yaf the messenger, for that tydyng,
A noble courser and a ryng,
And a robe of *ray.* (3)

Launfal tok leve of Teramour,
That was the bryȝt birde yn bour,
And kestè that swete *may;* (4)
Thanne seyde that swete wyȝt,

1 Artful of genius. 2 Smiled in silence.
3 Array. 4 Maid, Sax.

'Dreed the no thyng, syr gentyl knyȝt,
'Thou schalt hym sle that day.'

Launfal nolde nothing with hym have,
But Blaunchard hys stede, and Gyfre hys knave,
Of all hys fayr *mayné*; (1)
He schypede, and hadde wynd well good,
And wente over the salte flod,
Into Lumbardye.

When he was over the water ycome,
Ther the justes schule be nome,
In the cité of Atalye.
Syr Valentyne hadde a greet ost,
And Syr Launfal abatede her bost,
With lytyll companye:

And whan Syr Launfal was ydyȝt,
Upon Blaunchard hys stede lyȝt,
With helm, and spere, and schelde;
All that sawe hym yn armes bryȝt,
Geyde (2) they sawe never swych a knyȝt,
That hym wyth eyen beheld:

1 Attendants. 2 Thought.

Tho ride togydere thes knyȝtes two,
That har schaftes *to broste bo*, (1)
And *to-scyverede* (2) yn the felde:
Another cours togedere they rod,
That Syr Launfal helm *of glod*, (3)
In tale as hyt ys telde.

Syr Valentyne lough, and hadde good game;
Hadde Launfal never so moche schame
Beforhand yn no fyȝt:
Gyfre kedde he was good at nede,
And lepte upon hys maystrys stede,
No man ne segh with syȝt.

And er than thay togedere mette,
Hys lordes helm he on sette,
Fayre and well adyȝt;
Tho was Launfal glad and blythe,
And *donkede* (4) Gyfre many syde,
For his dede so mochel of myȝt;

Syr Valentyne smot Launfal soo,
That hys schelde fel hym fro,

1 Both burst.
2 Shivered.
3 *Off glod*—i. e. *glided*, slipt, fell.
4 Thanked many times.

Anoon ryȝht in that stounde:
And Gyfre the scheld up hent,
And broȝte hyt hys lord to presente,
Er hyt cam thonne to grounde.

Tho was Launfal glad and blythe,
And rode ayen the thrydde *syde*, (1)
As a knyȝt of mochell mounde;
Syr Valentyne he smot so there,
That horse and man both deede were,
Gronyng with grysly wounde.

All the lordes of Atalye,
To Syr Launfal hadde greet envye,
That Valentyne was yslawe;
And swore that he schold dye,
Ar he went out of Lumbardye,
And be hongede and to-drawe.

Syr Launfal brayde out hys *fochon*. (2)
And, as lyȝt as dew, he layde hem donne
In a lytyll *drawe*: (3)
And whan he hadde the lordes sclayn,

1 *Sithe*—*i. e.* time. 2 Falchion. 3 *Throw*—*i. e.* time.

He went ayen ynto Bretayn,
With solas and with plaw.

The tydyng com to Artour the Kyng,
Anoon wythout lesyng,
Of Syr Launfale's noblesse;
Anoon a *let* (1) to hym sende,
That Launfal schuld to hym wende,
At Seynt Jonnys Masse.

For King Artour wold a feste holde,
Of erles and of barouns bolde,
Of lordynges more and lesse.
Syr Launfal schuld be stward of halle,
For to *agye* (2) hys gestes alle,
For, cowth he of largesse.

Launfal toke leve of Teramour,
For to wende to Kyng Artour,
Hys feste for to agye;
Ther he fond merthe, and moch honour,
Ladyes that wer well bryȝt yn bour,
Of knyȝtes greet companye.

1 Letter. 2 To *guide*, or marshal his guests.

Fourty dayes leste the feste,
Ryche, ryal, and honeste,
What help hyt for to lye?
And at the fourty dayes ende,
The lordes toke har leve to wende,
Everych yn hys partye.

And after mete Syr *Taweyn*, (1)
Syr Gyeryes, and Agrafayn,
And Syr Launfal also,
Wente to daunce upon the grene,
Unther the tour, ther lay the quene,
Wyth syxty ladyes and mo.

To lede the daunce Launfal was set,
For hys largesse he was lovede the bet,
Certayne of alle tho:
The quene lay out, ond behelde them alle,
'I se (sche seyde) dauncę large Launfalle,
'To hym than wyll I go.

'Of all the knyȝtes that y se there,
'He ys the fayreste bachelere,

1 Probably Gawain.

'He ne hadde never no wyf;
'Tyde me good, ꝑther ylle,
'I wyll go and wyte hys wylle,
'Y love hym as my lyf.'

Sche tok wyth her a companye,
The fayrest that sche myȝte aspye,
Syxty ladyes and fyf:
And went hem down anoon ryȝtes,
Ham to play among the knyȝtes,
Well stylle, withouten stryf.

The quene yede to the formeste ende,
Betwene Launfal, and Gaweyn the hende,
And after her ladyes bryȝt:
To daunce they wente all yn same,
To see hem play hyt was fayr game,
A lady and a knyȝt.

They hadde menstrales of moch honours,
Fydelers, sytolyrs, and trompours,
And elles hyt were unryȝt:
Ther they playde, for sothe to say,
After mete, the somerys day,
All what hyt was neyȝ nyȝt.

And whane the daunce began to slake,
The quene gan Launfal to counsell take,
And seyde yn thys manere:
'Sertaynlyche, syr knyȝt,
'I have the lovyd with all my myȝt,
'More than thys seven ȝere.

'*But that* (1) thou lovye me,
'Sertes, y dye, for love of the!
'Launfal, my lemman dere!'
Than answerede the gentyl knyȝt,
'I *nell* (2) be traytour, *thay* (3) ne nyȝt,
'Be God that all may stere!'

Sche seyde—'Fy on the, thou coward,
'*An honger worth thou hye and hard;* (4)
'That thou ever were ybore!
'That thou lyvest hyt ys pyte;
'Thou lovest no woman, ne no woman the!
'Thou wer *worry* forlore!'

1 Unless. 2 Ne will. 3 Day.

4 I can neither understand this line, nor the word *worry* in the last line of this stanza.

The knyȝt was sore aschamed tho;
To speke ne myȝt he forgo;
And seyde, the quene before,
'I have loved a fayrer woman
'Than thou ever leydest thyn ey upon,
'Thys seven yer and more.

'Her *lothlokste made*, (1) wythoute wene,
'Myȝte bet be a quene,
'Than thou yn all thy lyve.'
Therfore the quene was swythe wroȝt;
Sche taketh her maydenes, and forth hy goth,
Into her tour all so *blyve*. (2)

And anon sche ley doun yn her bedde,
(For *wrethe* (3) sycke she hyr bredde,)
And swore, so most sche thryve,
Sche wold of Launfal be so *awreke*, (4)
That all the lond schuld hym speke,
With inne the dayes fyfe.

Kyng Artour com fro huntynge,
Blythe and glad yn all thyng,

1 Loathsomest maid. 2 Quickly. 3 Wrath. 4 Revenged.

To hys chamber than wente he.
Anoon the quene on hym gan crye,
'But y be awreke, y schall dye;
'Myn hert wyll breke a-thre!

'I spok to Launfal yn my game,
'And he besofte me of schame,
'My lemman for to be.
'And of a lemman hys *yelp* (1) he made,
'That the lodlokest mayde that sche hadde,
'Myȝt be a quene above me.'

Kyng Artour was well wroth,
And be God he swore hys oth,
That Launfal schuld be sclawe:
He went after doȝty knyȝtes,
To brynge Launfal anoon ryȝtes,
To be hongeth and to-drawe.

The knyȝtes *softe* (2) hym anoone,
But Launfal was to hys chaumber gon,
To have hadde solas and plawe,
He softe his leef, but sche was lore,

1 Boast. 2 Sought.

As sche hadde warnede hym before,
Tho was Launfal *unfawe*. (1)

He lokede yn hys alner,
That fond hym spendyng all plener,
Whan that he hadde nede,
And ther was noon, for sooth to say:
And Gyfre was yryde away,
Upon Blaunchard hys stede.

All that he hadde before ywonne,
Hyt malt as snow agens the sunne;
(In romaunce as we rede.)
Hys armur, that was whyt as flour,
Hyt become of blak colour;
And thus then Launfal seyde.

'Alas!' he seyde, 'my creature,
'How schall I from the endure,
'Swetyng Tryamour!
'All my joye I have forlore.
'*And the (that me is worst fore,)*
'*Than blyssful berde yn bour.*' (2)

1 Probably un-fain.—*i. e.* unhappy.

2 These two lines are rather obscure; their apparent meaning is,

He bet hys body and hys hedde ek;
And cursede the mouth that he with spek,
With care and greet dolour:
And, for sorow, yn that stounde,
Anoon he fell *aswowe* (1) to grounde;
With that come knyȝtes four,

And bond hym, and ladde hym tho,
(Tho was the knyȝt yn doble wo,)
Before Artour the Kyng.
Than seyde Kyng Artour,
'Fyle! ataynte traytour!
'Why madest thou swyche *yelpyng*? (2)

'That thy lemmannes lodlokest mayde
'Was fayrer than my wyf, thou seyde:
'That was a fowll *lesynge!* (3)
'And thou besoftest her, befor than,
'That sche schold be thy lemman;
'That was mys proud lykynge!'

'I have lost all my joy, and thee (which is my greatest misfortune) 'thou beautiful,' &c. The phrase, 'blissful bird (*i. e.* bride or maiden), 'in bower,' occurs in almost every poem of the 14th and 15th centuries.

1 In a swoon. 2 Boasting. 3 Lying, falsehood.

The knyȝt answerede, with egre mode,
Before the kyng ther he stode,
The quene on hym gan lye!
'Sethe that y ever was yborn,
'I besofte her here beforn,
'Never of no folye.

'But sche sayde y nas no man,
'Ne that me lovede no woman,
'Ne no womannes companye;
'And y answerede her, and sayde,
'That my lemmannes lodlokest mayde
'To be a quene was better wordye.

'Sertes, lordlynges, hyt ys so:
'Y am a redy for to *tho* (1)
'All that the court wyll loke.'
To say the soth wythout les,
All togedere how yt was,
xii knyȝtes *wer dryve to boke:* (2)

All they seyde ham betwene,
That knewe the maners of the quene,

1 For *thole*, suffer. 2 Were ordered to consult the law.

And the *queste* (1) toke,
The quene bar los of swych a word,
That sche lovede lemmans without her lord;
Har never on hyt forsoke.

Therfor, they seyden alle,
Hyt was long on the quene, and not on Launfal,
Therof they gon hym *skere*. (2)
And yf he myȝte hys lemman brynge,
(That he made of swyche ȝelpynge,)
Other the maydenes *kere*, (3)

Bryȝtere than the quene of hewe,
Launfal schild be holde trewe,
Of that yn all manere.
And yf he myȝt not brynge hys *lef*, (4)
He schud be hongede as a thef,
They seyden, all yn fere.

All yn fere they make proferynge,
That Launfal schuld hys lemman bryng;
Hys heed he gan to *laye*: (5)

1 Enquiry, inquest. 2 Secure, assure.
3 Procure, *querir*, Fr. 4 Lief, love.
5 He pledged his head for the performance of the condition.

Than seyde the quene, wythout lesynge,
'ȝif he bryngeth a feyrer thynge,
'Put out my eeyn gray.'

Whan that *waiour* (1) was take on honde,
Launfal therto two *borwes* (2) fonde,
Noble knyȝtes tway.
Syr Percevall, and Syr Gawayn,
They wer hys borwes, soth to sayn,
Tyll a certayn day.

The certayn day, I ȝow plyȝt,
Was xii moneth and fourtenyȝt,
That he schuld hys lemman brynge.
Syr Launfal, that noble knyȝt,
Greet sorow and care yn hym was lyȝt,
Hys hondys he gan wrynge.

So greet sorowe hym was upon,
Gladlyche hys lyf he wold a forgon,
In care and in mornynge.
Gladlyche he wold hys hed forgo;
Everyche man therfore was wo,
That wyste of that tydynge.

1 Wager. 2 *Borrows—i. e.* pledges.

The certayn day was *nyȝyng*, (1)
Hys borowes hym broȝt before the kyng,
The kyng recordede tho,
And bad hym bryng hys lyf yñ syȝt:
Syr Launfal seyde that he ne myȝt,
Therfor hym *kas* (2) well wo.

The kyng commaundede the barouns alle
To yeve jugement on Launfal,
And *dampney* (3) hym to *sclo*. (4)
Than sayde the Erl of Cornewaylle,
That was with them at that counceyle,
He wyllyd naȝt do so.

'Greet schame hyt wer us all upon,
'For to dampny that gantylman,
'That hath be hend and fre:
'Thus fer, lordynges, doth be my rede;
'Our kyng he wyl.yth another wey lede,
'Out of lond Launfal schal fle.'

And as they stod thus spekynge,
The barouns sawe come rydynge,

1 Nighing, drawing nigh. 2 Causeth.
3 Condemn. 4 Slay—*i. e.* be slayn.

Ten maydenes bryȝt of ble;
Ham thoȝt they wer so bryȝt and schene,
That the lodlokest without *wene*, (1)
Har quene than myȝte be.

Tho seyde Gawayn that corteys knyȝt,
'Launfal! brodyr! drede the no *wyȝt!* (2)
'Her cometh thy lemman hende!'
Launfal answerede, and seyde, 'Y wys
'None of ham my lemman nys,
'Gawayn, my lefly frende!'

To that castell they wente ryȝt,
At the gate they gonne alyȝt,
Before Kyng Artour gonne they wende,
And bede hym make a redy hastyly,
A fayr chamber for her lady,
That was come of kynges kende.

'Ho ys your lady?' Artour seyde.
'Ye schull ywyte,' seyde the mayde,
'For sche cometh ryde.'
The kyng commaundede, for her sake,

1 Without opinion—*i. e.* without doubt. 2 Not a whit.

The fayryst chamber for to take,
In hys palys that tyde.

And anon to hys barouns he sente,
For to yeve jugemente,
Upon that traytour full of pryde.
The barouns answerede anoon ryȝt,
'Have we seyn the maydenes bryȝt;
'Whe schull not longe abyde.'

A new tale they gonne tho,
Some of wele and some of wo,
Har lord the kyng to *queme.* (1)
Some dampnede Launfal there,
And some made quyt, and skere,
Har tales war well *breme:* (2)

Tho saw they other ten maydenes bryȝt,
Fayrer than the other ten of syȝt,
As they gone hym deme.
They ryd upon joly *moyles* (3) of Spayne,
With sadell and brydell of Champayne,
Her *lorains* (4) lyȝt gonne leme.

1 Please. 2 Solemn. 3 Mules.
4 Reins, Fr. La Combe's Dict.

They wer *ycloden yn samyt tyre*, (1)
Ech man hadde greꝫt desyre
To se har clodynge.
Tho seyde Gawayn, that courtayse knyꝫt,
'Launfal! her cometh thy swete wyꝫt,
'That may thy *bote* (2) brynge.'

Launfal answerede wyth drery *doꝫt*, (3)
And seyde, 'alas, y knowe hem noꝫt,
'Ne non of all the ofspringe.'
Forth they wente to that palys,
And lyꝫte at the hye deys,
Before Artour the kyng:

And grete the kyng and quene ek,
And *oo* (4) made thys wordes spake,
To the Kyng Artour.
'Thine halle *agrayde*, (5) *and hele* the walles,
'With clodes, and wyth ryche palles,
'Aꝫens my lady Tryamour!'

1 Clothed in attire of Samite. Tyrwhitt calls the *Samite* '*a rich silk*.' Le Grand translates this passage,—Elles etoient vêtues d'un "Bliaud d'*Or*." 2 Help. 3 Thought.
4 *One?* 5 Prepare, and cover; both words are Saxon.

The kyng answerede, *bedene*, (1)
Well come, ye maydenes *schene*, (2)
Be our Lord the Savyour.
He commaunded Launcelot du Lak to brynge
hem yn fere,
In the chamber thar har felawes were,
Wyth merthe and moche honour;

Anoon the quene suppose gyle,
That Launfalle schulle, yn a whyle,
Be ymade quyt and skere,
Thoruȝ hys lemman that was commynge;
Anon sche seyde to Artour the kyng,
Syre, 'Courtys yf thou were,

'Or yf thou lovedest thyn honour,
'I schuld be awreke of that traytour,
'That doth me changy chere.
'To Launfal thou schuldest not spare;
'Thy barouns dryven the to *bismare*; (3)
'He ys hem lef and dere.'

1 Immediately. Ruddeman's Gloss. to G. Douglas.
2 Beautiful. 3 Blame, Sax.

And as the quene spak to the kyng,
The barouns seyȝ come rydynge,
A damesele alone.
Upon a whyt comely palfrey,
(They saw never non so gay
Upon the grounde gone.)

Gentyll, jolyf, as bryd on bowe,
In all manere fayr inowe
To wonye in worldly wone.
The lady was bryȝt as blosme on brere,
Wyth eyen gray, with lovelych chere,
Her *leyre* (1) lyȝt shoone;

As rose on rys her rode was red;
The her schon upon her hed,
As gold wyre that shynyth bryȝt.
Sche hadde a crounne upon her, molde
Of ryche stones and of gold,
That lovesome lemed lyȝt.

The lady was clad yn purpure palle,
With gentyll body, and myddyll small,

1 Complexion.

That semely was of syȝt.
Her mantyll was furryth wyth whyt ermyn,
Ireversyed, (1) jolyf, and fynd,
No rychere be ne myȝt.

Her sadell was semyly set,
The *sambus* (2) wer grene felvet,
Ipaynted wyth ymagerye;
The bordure was of belles,
Of ryche gold, and nothyng elles,
That any man myȝte aspye.

In the arsouns, before and behynde,
Were they stones of Ynde,
Gay for the waystrye: (3)
The *paytrelle* (4) of her palfraye
Was worth an erldome stout and gay,
The best in Lumbardye.

A Gerfawcon sche bar on her hond;
A softe pas her palfray fond,

1 Perhaps *faced*, from *revers*, Fr. 2 The sambus, or sambuc, (sambuca) seems to have been the saddle-cloth, or housing.

3 Superlatively gay. See Tyrwhitt's Gloss. to Chaucer.

4 *Poitrail*, Fr. breast-plate.

That men her schuld beholde:
Thorugh Karlyon rood that lady,
Twey whyte greyhoundys ronne her by,
Har colors were of gold.

And when Launfal saw that lady,
To all the folk he gan crye *an hye,* (1)
Bothe to yonge and olde.
'Her (he seyde) comyth my lemman swete!
'Sche myght me *of my balys bete* (2)
'Gef that lady wolde!'

Forth sche went ynto the halle,
Ther was the quene and the ladyes all,
And also Kyng Artour;
Her maydenes come ayens her rygt,
To take her styrop when sche lygt,
Of the lady Dame Tryamour.

Sche dede off her mantell on the flet,
That men schuld beholde the bet.
Without a more sojour,

1 In haste. 2 Help me out of my bale or misery.

Kyng Artour gave her fayre grete;
And sche hym agayn, with wordes swete,
That were of greet valour.

Up stod the quene, and ladyes stout,
Her for to beholde all about,
How evene sche stod up ryȝt;
Than twer they wyth her all so *donne* (1)
As ys the mone ayen the sonne,
Aday whan hyt ys lyȝt.

Than seyde sche to Artour the Kyng,
'Syr, hyder I come, for swych a thyng
'To skere Launfal the knyȝt,
'That he never, yn no folye,
'Besofte the quene yn no *drurye* (2)
'By dayes ne be nyȝt.

'Therfor, Syr Kyrg, good keep thou myne;
'He bad naȝt her, but sche bade hym,
'Her lemman for to be:
'And he answerede her and seyde,

1 Dun, dark. 2 Gallantry.

'That hys lemman's lothlokest mayde
'Was fayryr than was sche.'

Kyng Artour seyde, wythouten othe,
'Ech man may yse, that ys sothe,
'Bryȝter that ye be.'
Wyth that Dame Tryamour to the quene geth,
And blew on her swych a breth,
That never eft myȝt sche se.

The lady lep on her palfray,
And bad hem all have good day,
Sche nolde no longer abyde.
Wyth that come Gyfre all so prest,
Wyth Launfalys stede out of the forest,
And stod Launfal besyde.

The knyȝt to hors he gan to sprynge,
Anoon, without any lettynge,
Wyth hys lemman away to ryde;
The lady tok her maydenys echon,
And went the way that sche had er gon,
Wyth solas and wyth pryde.

The lady rod forth [of] Cardeuyle,
Far into a jolyf ile.
Olyroun that hyȝte;
Everych yer, upon a certayn day,
Me may here Launfales stede *nay*, (1)
And hym se wyth syȝt.

Ho that wyll ther axsy justes,
To kepe hys armes [fro] the rustes,
In tournement, other fyȝt,
Dar he never forther gon;
Ther he may fynde justes anon,
Wyth Syr Launfal the knyȝt.

Thus Launfal, wythouten fable,
That noble knyȝt of the round table,
Was take ynto Fayrye:
Seythe (2) saw hym yn thys land no man,
Ne no more of hym tell y ne can,
For sothe wythoute lye.

1 Neigh. 2 Since.

Thomas Chestre made thys tale,
Of the noble knyȝt Syr Launfale,
Good of Chyvalrye:
Jesus that ys Hevene Kyng,
ȝeve us all hys blessyng,
And hys moder Marye! Amen.

EXPLICIT LAUNFAL.

00042907

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 28 September, 2015